Interview with Curtis F. Jones

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

CURTIS F. JONES

Interviewed by: Thomas F. Conlon

Initial interview date: March 29, 1994

Q: Today is March 29, 1994. I am Thomas F. Conlon. I am interviewing Curtis F. Jones, a retired Foreign Service Officer, on behalf of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program under the Association for Diplomatic Studies. Curt, I wonder if you could give us something about your early life: where you were born, when, and something about your early schooling.

JONES: I was born in Bangor, ME, on October 25, 1921. I graduated from Bangor High School and went on to Bowdoin College, where I received my B. A. degree in 1942. I was drafted into the U. S. Army, where I served for three years. I'd never heard of the Foreign Service until toward the end of the war. I was in Hawaii—down South on Johnston Island, to be precise...

Q: That's the place where poison gas is stored at the moment.

JONES: That's right.

Q: What part of the Army were you in?

JONES: The Air Force, which, at that time, was part of the Army. I was pushing buttons on a magnetic map in air traffic control. Over the teletype came a notification of examinations to be given for the Foreign Service.

Q: I remember that. Continue, please.

JONES: I had never heard of the Foreign Service, but it sounded like a good deal. So I sent in my application. I suspect that intervention by my grandfather with one of the members of Congress from Maine was responsible for my otherwise inexplicable transfer from Johnston Island to San Francisco, where the written exam was being given. It wasn't being given in Hawaii or in Johnston Island. I took the exam while I was still in military service.

Q: Where were you stationed in San Francisco?

JONES: I was at the Air Traffic Control Center in San Francisco—still with the same organization.

Q: So you'd been an air traffic controller on Johnston Island.

JONES: Right. I took the written [examination for the Foreign Service] some time in the fall of 1945. I was mustered out in December, 1945, went to graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, but dropped that as soon as I entered the Foreign Service on June 16, 1946. I was a member of one of the early classes [in 1946]—perhaps the first or second class. I attended an introductory course at the FSI [Foreign Service Institute] with 12 or 14 others.

Q: What sort of a course did you have at the FSI?

JONES It was a one-month course [covering] a basic, broad brush introduction to consular affairs, administration, and protocol. I still remember Perry Jester telling us of the horrible

time he had when he sent out half of his [calling] cards and then lost the list and couldn't remember who had the cards and who didn't. This was presented to us at the time...

Q: As a horrible example. Don't ever do that!

JONES: It was a grave crisis in the diplomatic service.

Q: Let me go back to just one point. You attended Bowdoin College. What kind of course did you follow there?

JONES: The last year or so I started to specialize in government. I didn't take much of it because I took an accelerated course, which consisted of seven courses instead of the usual four, during the last semester or two. I graduated in September, 1942, instead of June, 1943.

Q: So you're saying that you more or less "happened" on the Foreign Service and that it hadn't been part of your long term planning.

JONES: It was totally fortuitous.

Q: I've known a number of people who took the exam under those circumstances and subsequently went into the Foreign Service. Please continue. You entered the Foreign Service and went through the FSI course. What was your first assignment after the FSI?

JONES: I'd asked for Russian specialization. Then I thought it over and decided that maybe the competition would be too stiff. So I changed. I had happened to take several months of Arabic while I was in the Army, under the ASTP [Army Specialized Training Program].

Q: So you were also in ASTP. You know, Henry Kissinger was in ASTP.

JONES: I've written a long article on the ASTP which the FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL is holding and allegedly is going to print some day.

Q: Then you were in the Foreign Area Studies Program [in the ASTP]?

JONES: Yes, at the University of Pennsylvania. I studied Arabic and French. The theory was that we were going to go to North Africa and be military governors. It never materialized. By the time we finished [the course] the “front” had moved up to Italy.

Q: The ASTP was an interesting program. As I think you probably realize, the Army had no specific purpose for it.

JONES: I think that, basically, it was a boondoggle to keep the universities going when most of their male students had left. It impacted on a lot of our lives—mine, for example, and that of Rodger Davies, who was in the ASTP program at Princeton University. He also studied Arabic and also became a Near Eastern specialist.

Q: That's an interesting point. So you finished the basic officer course, a one-month program at the FSI. Later on they made it somewhat longer—extended it to three months. Did you have any preference as to where you wanted to go after you completed the A-100 course [at the FSI]?

JONES: Well, aside from asking for the Arab world, I had none. We had a rather dramatic meeting of our class. Perry Jester called each man by name and informed him what his post was going to be. We were asked first to say what post we had asked for. I guess we did have an opportunity to express a preference. I remember, for example, that there was quite considerable amusement when they asked Frank Meloy [a member of the class] what post he'd asked for. He said, “Montreal.” So Perry Jester said, “Well, you're going to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.” I suspect that Frank Meloy realized all the time that he was going to go to the Middle East. Frank, of course, was killed in Beirut.

Q: I entered the Foreign Service with his younger brother, Dan. I knew Frank, just in passing.

JONES: Dan became a legend in our side of the service for having become more Japanese than the Japanese. Charley Ferguson used to say that the ability to speak a foreign language is primarily histrionic. You have to put yourself in the role. If you're a Japanese speaker, you put yourself in the role of a Japanese.

Q: What had been your choice and what post did you get?

JONES: I got Beirut, which was the best post for a beginner in the Foreign Service. It was an oriental [Middle Eastern] post, but it had been “civilized” by the French over a period of 50 years or so. In 1946 Beirut was a paradise. It had not yet been destroyed by world and Arab politics.

Q: What was your assignment—or did you start out with language study?

JONES: No, I started out as Disbursing Officer. It so happened that the initial, FSI Arabic program after World War II was established in Beirut.

Q: Was it functioning when you went to Beirut? JONES: No, but some time after I arrived in Beirut in 1946, Don Bergus, Bill Sands, and Harlan Clark arrived to form the first, post-war class. Before World War II the Department had trained its Arabists at a school in Paris, in written, classical Arabic, and they'd never been very successful. After World War II the linguists took over and did a very good job. I was given a special dispensation to sit in on the Arabic courses in the afternoon, provided that I got my disbursing work done at other times.

Q: Did you have trouble managing both [activities]?

JONES: Not too much, no, because I had already had some Arabic, which the others had not had.

Q: I meant the disbursing officer job.

JONES: There was a lot of accounting to learn, which was never my strong point, but I survived that. Then, subsequently, I went into the Economic and Commercial Section.

Q: So this was a rotational assignment—first Disbursing and then the Commercial Section?

JONES: As a matter of fact, they rotated me out of Beirut entirely. I went to Addis Ababa.

Q: So you were in Beirut in 1946-47.

JONES: Yes.

Q: How did you happen to get your assignment to Addis Ababa? Did that just come up "out of the blue"?

JONES: Yes, out of the blue.

Q: What was your assignment there?

JONES: I did primarily economic work until John Randolph ran into trouble. I think that he had some altercation with the local staff. The consular position became vacant, and I went into consular work for a while. In the interim I applied for full-time Arabic language training and finally got it. Then, in the fall of 1948 Jimmy Moose came through as a [Foreign Service] Inspector. He asked me what I wanted to do. I said that I wanted to be an [Arabic] language specialist. He himself had studied Arabic at the Ecole des Langues Etrangeres [Foreign Languages School] in Paris. He was totally out of sympathy with the language program and with my decision. He later wrote, in his [inspection] report, "I think that this

man is asking for language training so that he can get out of the real work of the Service—namely, administration, consular work, and the rest."

In any event, in the winter of 1948-1949 I went to Washington where, by then, Arabic language courses were being given at the Foreign Service Institute.

Q: So you began your Arabic studies at the FSI. Did you get this in association with leave? You would have been eligible for home leave at some time.

JONES: I believe that I had some weeks of home leave before I started. we started out with Bob Houghton, Bob Stein, Bill Brewer, myself, and a couple of people from other agencies under the direction of Charley Ferguson, who was a gifted linguist and instructor —in many languages, including Arabic, Bengali, and I don't know what else. We studied for six months and then Don Bergus and I were sent to the University of Pennsylvania.

Q: You'd already been at the University of Pennsylvania for ASTP training.

JONES: Well, as a matter of fact, this was my third tour at the University of Pennsylvania. By pure happenstance I had been sent to the University of Pennsylvania to study Moroccan Arabic [in the ASTP] during World War II. I returned to the University of Pennsylvania after the war as a graduate student. And now, for the third time, I was back at the University of Pennsylvania as a State Department student. To this day the University of Pennsylvania has never asked me for any money. I think I should send them some.

Q: That's a good idea. Well, were you married at this point?

JONES: I was married in 1943.

Q: When you were in the Army. Where was your wife from?

JONES: Massachusetts.

Q: You'd known her, then...

JONES: She went to Bates College, which is about 20 or 30 miles from Bowdoin College. We met in Maine.

Q: So, there you were, studying Arabic again at the University of Pennsylvania, after the FSI training. How long were you at the University of Pennsylvania this time?

JONES: One academic year. I took courses at Penn and also at the Dropsie School of Hebrew and Cognate Learning in Pennsylvania. Subsequently, I wrote a long, long report to the FSI, which they said was useful, on the disadvantages of trying to learn Arabic in an academic environment. At the University of Pennsylvania I was again called on to study Arabic from the classical viewpoint. This would be like studying French by beginning with Latin.

Q: Was the training at the University of Pennsylvania better than the training at the FSI, or the reverse?

JONES: It wasn't better. It was different. We were being taught classical Arabic—Koranic Arabic and a certain amount of newspaper Arabic, whereas the “useful” Arabic to the Foreign Service Officer is the contemporary, colloquial dialect of a given country.

Q: And this is what you had...

JONES: For the six months at the FSI.

Q: You were speaking of newspaper Arabic. I'm not at all familiar with Arabic, but I understand that newspaper Arabic is virtually the same from one end of the Arab world to the other. Is that correct?

JONES: It's sufficiently similar that any educated Arab can read a newspaper from Cairo or from Beirut. I suspect that there are stylistic and phrase differences. However, it is not Koranic Arabic. It has evolved considerably.

Q: Would this be something like the difference between British English and American English— enough so that it's clearly different but understandable?

JONES: I suspect so, whereas differences in dialect are almost as great as between French, Italian, and Spanish.

Q: So you spent a year at the University of Pennsylvania. What years were those?

JONES: 1948-49, I believe.

Q: Then you completed the course at Pennsylvania or was it again interrupted at some point?

JONES: I completed the course at Pennsylvania but was not allowed to take it for credit.

Q: When your FSI course was over, what was your next assignment?

JONES: I had no voice in. I was sent to Tripoli, Libya, as a member of the staff of Ambassador Lewis Clark. He was an “old China hand,” as you may know, and, by that time, was a member of the United Nations Commission for Libya. Libya had been under Italian control. The British took it during World War II, and it was going to become independent. The UN Commission's role was to shepherd Libya toward independence. For about a year—roughly, during 1950—I served with that commission in Libya.

There was considerable rivalry at that time between Lewis Clark, as Ambassador, and the Consul General in Tripoli, Andrew Lynch, who was quick to tell people that he was the ranking American in Libya because he headed the American Mission in Libya. I made a very serious, tactical error. I was given the option, after the UN Commission “folded,” to

be transferred out of Libya or to stay on. Since I'd only been in Libya about a year and was learning the Libyan dialect, I took the option of staying at the Consulate General, under Andrew Lynch. This was a big mistake because it turned out that Lynch had not only resented Ambassador Clark but also resented everybody on his staff.

Q: So you were part of the "enemy"?

JONES: That's right.

Q: What was your assignment in the Consulate General during this period?

JONES: I was disbursing officer and did a certain amount of political reporting.

Q: So that's when you first began political reporting—in Libya?

JONES: Yes.

Q: When did Libya finally become independent?

JONES: I couldn't tell you. It was probably 1952 because, while I was in Libya, Henry Villard arrived as the first American Ambassador to the independent Kingdom of Libya.

Q: How did Consul General Lynch take this?

JONES: The Consul General left. I think that he went as Ambassador to Somalia. Ambassador Henry Villard arrived, and there was immediately a very serious protocol problem because Ambassador Clark and his wife, as well as my wife and I, had gone to Benghazi to make a formal call on King Idriss and his wife. After Ambassador Villard arrived, the Queen came to Tripoli to be a patient at the American military hospital at Wheelus Air Force Base.

The question was, how would my wife and I deal with this, since Ambassador Villard had not made his call on King Idriss, and Mrs. Villard had not made her call on the Queen. The

Palestinian lady who was an aide to the Queen, called Betty, my wife. They were pretty good friends by that time. The aide said, “If you'd like to call on the Queen, she is at such and such an address,” which was being kept very secret.

Q: For security reasons.

JONES: Yes. She was not accessible to the press or receiving any visitors. So Betty and I discussed this problem. The question was how would we deal with [Ambassador and Mrs.] Villard? So I told Ambassador Villard that Betty had been invited to go and call on the Queen, and she was planning to accept the invitation on such and such a day. The Ambassador later indicated that he had discussed this with his wife, who happened to be a lady who played a very “key” role in the decisions of the Embassy. As a matter of fact, she led him [the Ambassador] around by the nose. So I was told that, yes, my wife should probably accept the invitation as a “command performance.” Ambassador Villard then left on a tour of the Fezzan area of southern Libya.

Then it occurred to us that Mrs. Villard should have more information about where the Queen was. So Betty called Mrs. Villard and said, “I just want to tell you that I'm making this call, and the Queen is at such and such an address. She can be reached through this telephone number.” Apparently, Ambassador Villard hadn't fully cleared Betty's visit with his wife. She exploded and told my wife that she was getting above her station, didn't realize that she was married to a Third Secretary, and who did she think she was to make a call on the Queen of Libya before the Ambassador's wife made her call? Finally, my wife was instructed, as I recall, not to make the call at all, although she could go with Mrs. Villard and sit in the corner, on condition that she not open her mouth. And this is the way it finally happened.

Q: Well, there were those “dragon ladies” in the Foreign Service. Some of them exerted a very considerable influence, as you know very well, on all kinds of things that they should never have been involved in.

JONES: Well, Mrs. Villard was of Russian origin, like Mrs. Loy Henderson [wife of the former Under Secretary for Political Affairs], who had the same kind of reputation. I don't know whether that proves anything or not.

Q: I don't know. Certainly, Mrs. Loy Henderson was famous for insulting people from the Soviet Embassy in Washington.

JONES: Loy Henderson, of course, had to be transferred to the Middle East. He is credited by old Middle East hands with having resisted more strenuously than anybody else in the State Department (except, of course, Secretary Marshall) the decision to support the partition of Palestine and then the precipitate recognition of Israel in 1948.

Q: We'll be getting to that point later on, but it was certainly a key decision.

JONES: Yes.

Q: Well, at that time in Libya, how much contact could you have with Libyans? Leaving aside this problem with the Queen, were you able to move fairly freely in the society?

JONES: Yes. The situation in Libya at that time was very open, insofar as contacts between Americans and Libyans were concerned. The only restraint was that imposed by the British, because the British were still in control of the country. I was in the process of writing a basic labor report. None had ever been done from the American point of view.

This was an effort for which I was not entirely qualified. I was a little naive and possibly a bit of a “bull in the China shop.” I remember, for example, that I went into a shop in Libya where some kind of mechanical work was being done. I introduced myself and chatted with the personnel, the staff of the shop. I asked them various questions about their conditions of work, their wages, and so on. What I didn't realize was that I was opening up a feud between two competing factions of the labor movement. After I left, they got into a very serious conflict. So the British Director of Labor—since the country, in effect, was a

British colony—called Consul General Lynch and wanted to know who the hell was this "inexperienced, callow" Foreign Service type who was going around, provoking riots in Tripoli? Lynch called me in and read me the riot act. So the result was that, as far as my recollection of Lynch's stewardship is concerned, I suffered severely.

Q: So you got a rocket. Did this actually get into an efficiency report?

JONES: I suspect so. You couldn't see your efficiency reports in those days. But all I can say is that the labor report was received so well back in Washington that my next tour of duty was in Washington, in INR [Bureau of Intelligence Research].

Q: That's when I met you.

JONES: Yes, I think so. The attention of INR had been attracted to me because of that report.

Q: Probably, it was the first labor report from Libya, too, so that always has a special impact.

JONES: Right.

Q: Did you have any impression of how Libya's concerns would affect other African countries? You remember that, later on, Libya under Colonel Qadhafi asserted sovereignty over a strip of northern Chad.[Aozou strip]

JONES: Under King Idriss Libya stayed within the Western orbit—the British, primarily, but increasingly the Americans, as time went on. The only experience that I had with Arabs outside of Libya was when some busloads of Algerians came through Libya on their way to Cairo to greet Colonel Nasser. They weren't allowed to have any contact with the Libyans.

Q: Were there any other aspects of your tour there in Tripoli which you would want to raise at this point? You had done some political work and you were a disbursing officer, once again. Did you get involved in consular work?

JONES: No.

Q: Then your tour in Tripoli covered the years...

JONES: The tour in Tripoli ended when the UN Commission on Libya convened in Geneva for a month to prepare its final report. So I spent one month in Geneva, probably in late 1952.

Q: Did you go up there with Ambassador Clark?

JONES: Yes.

Q: So you were on good enough terms with him and were obviously the person to bring along. Were there other political officers there?

JONES: No, the Ambassador's staff consisted essentially of me and the secretary.

Q: That narrows it down, somewhat. So you saw the end of the UN phase and then the entry into independence.

JONES: Yes. I misspoke earlier. It was at that point that the Ambassador asked me whether I wanted a transfer from Libya. And I said, “No. I'll go back to Tripoli for another year,” which I did. Then, when I was away from Tripoli, I received a telegram saying that I had been proposed to open a post in Khartoum, Sudan.

Q: You accepted this assignment?

JONES: I was delighted. It was a very good career opportunity.

Q: Were you going to get some home leave at this point?

JONES: Yes. When I got on the boat to return to the U. S. for home leave, I met another Foreign Service Officer who informed me that he had been designated to open the post in Khartoum!

Q: Who was that?

JONES: I can't remember his name. As it happened, when I finally got back to Washington, some time, I guess, in late 1952 or early 1953, it developed that Bill Burdett opened the post in Khartoum. Then I talked with Lowell Pinkerton, who was the man who discussed your personnel file...

Q: Career Development, I think they called that function later on.

JONES: Yes. And Pinkerton told me that several of my seniors, including Ambassador Lewis Clark, felt that I wasn't ready to open a new post. So consequently I was going to be assigned as Consul in Port Said [Egypt]. I spent 1953 and 1954 in Port Said. As a matter of fact, it was probably a much better assignment for me, [looking back on it] over the years, than Khartoum would have been. Because my two years in Port Said were my only tour in Egypt. I learned a fair amount of Egyptian Arabic and subsequently became the Syrian-Egyptian desk officer.

Q: How was the situation in Egypt at that time? When was King Farouk deposed? He was overthrown in about 1953, wasn't he?

JONES: “Black Saturday,” or whatever it was called, was in January, 1952. This involved a clash between the British and the Egyptians in the Suez Canal Zone which resulted in the death of a number of Egyptian policemen—maybe 30 or more. On the following day there were major riots in Cairo, in which the Muslim Brothers were very active. The Egyptians are usually thought of as docile, friendly, and happy go lucky people. But on this occasion

passions ran so high that several British at the Turf Club were torn limb from limb by an enraged crowd, while a number of targets which the “Islamists” opposed were burned down—bars, theaters, and that kind of thing.

Q: Wasn't “Islamist” a term that emerged later on? It wasn't the contemporary term.

JONES: Yes. These were [the so-called] Muslim Brothers.

Q: “Islamist” is a very convenient term.

JONES: An “Islamist” is somebody who wants to return to the days of the Prophet and the Koran, who wants to impose the doctrine of Islam and make it the law of the land. So the answer to your question is that the political ferment in Egypt, which had already reached fever peak in January [1952], finally culminated in July, 1952, in the coup d'etat staged by [Egyptian military] officers, including Nasser, Naguib, Sadat, and a number of others. In those days rebellions were fairly polite. They actually put King Farouk and his family on a boat and sent them off to Europe. When I arrived [in Egypt], Nasser was already in power. Naguib was the figurehead...

Q: He was moved fairly quickly away from the levers of command.

JONES: Yes. In Port Said the Americans had to thread their way among three factions: first of all, there were the British who controlled the [Suez] Canal by virtue of the presence of their [armed] forces. Second were the French, who ran the Suez Canal Company. Third were the Egyptians, who were trying to assert their nominal sovereignty over the Canal Zone. The Egyptians themselves were divided three ways: there were still members of the old, monarchist faction who, of course, were lying very low. Then there was the Naguib faction. And finally the Nasser faction.

Q: Where was Sadat in this situation? Was he a supporter of Nasser?

JONES: I suspect that, when it came time to expel Naguib, all of the members of the Revolutionary Command Council, the RCC, went with Nasser. I'm sure that Sadat did, because Nasser picked him as his vice president, though later on.

Q: Regarding your assignment to Port Said, how many Americans were in the Consulate at that time?

JONES: One Vice-Consul, Marshall Wright, for most of that time; one mail clerk, Ed Christie; and an Assistant Naval Attach#—I can't remember his real first name—"Blackie" Lindenmuth, who was subsequently replaced by LCDR Gillette.

Q: You were the Principal Officer?

JONES: Yes. Of course, the [position of] Principal Officer in Port Said is a much less prestigious position than that of the Principal Officer in Khartoum, where I thought that I was going to go. However, in terms of acquiring expertise on the Middle East and the Arab world, the Port Said assignment was much better.

Q: I've never been to Egypt and I'm a little unsure of the geography, but how far is Port Said from Cairo?

JONES: Oh, 100 to 150 miles.

Q: It's far enough so that you don't go there in the morning and come back in the afternoon —not easily.

JONES: Not as a rule. You can do it, but...

Q: Are the roads fairly good between the two places?

JONES: Not too bad. They were British maintained. The Canal is about 100 miles long, as I recall. Port Said is at the North end, and Suez is at the South end. To go to Cairo,

you drive down to the middle of the Canal to Isma'ilya, on the Great Bitter Lake, and then turn West to Cairo. We did this, of course, quite often. As a matter of fact, the procedure established by my predecessor and followed by me was to do almost all of our political reporting by letter to the Ambassador and let him incorporate that in Embassy reporting as he wished. An exception was made by [then Vice-Consul] Marshall Wright with my endorsement. An Israeli commercial ship, called the “Elat,” tried to “break” the blockade of the Canal. It was stopped, of course, by the Egyptians, who were then in control of the Canal.

Q: What year was that?

JONES: I said that the Egyptians were in control of the Canal. [Actually], the British were still in control of the Canal Zone, but the Egyptians had...

Q: Control of the access.

JONES: They had control of the access [to the Canal]. This would have been in 1953 or possibly in 1954.

Q: You were already in Port Said. Did you attend Embassy staff meetings when you went up to Cairo?

JONES: Yes. I sat in on staff meetings and, I recall, was invited to participate [in the discussions]. As a matter of fact, when I went back [to the U. S. on transfer] from Port Said, my recollection is that Ambassador Caffery was leaving Cairo to retire. He and I were on the same ship. I remember that there had been some fairly serious unrest in Cairo after he left.

Q: When did he leave Cairo?

JONES: If my recollection is correct, this would have been in late 1954 or early 1955, when I was leaving Port Said to go back to INR. I recall Ambassador Caffery saying at the

time that he didn't understand what had happened to the Embassy which, at the time, was under Lewis Jones, the DCM [and charg# d'affaires]. Ambassador Caffery said, “What's the matter with them? They've lost control of the situation back there.” But I couldn't possibly identify what unrest he referred to, because Egypt went through several years of unrest in those days. It wasn't until 1956 [that] the British finally evacuated the Canal. The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was signed...

Q: The treaty was negotiated, as I recall, mainly by Anthony Eden [then British Foreign Minister], isn't that so?

JONES: I suspect so, yes.

Q: Wasn't the date of the treaty 1954, and it was to be phased in over a period of time?

JONES: I believe that you're probably right.

Q: So the treaty was negotiated in about 1954. Eden surely would have known, by that time, that a British military presence in the Suez Canal area had become essentially untenable. Now, you were out of Egypt...

JONES: I was following [developments concerning] the Canal very closely. As a matter of fact, I am probably the one person who probably, speaking from the vantage point of INR, should have predicted the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Nasser.

Q: Let's go back a bit to the time you were there in Port Said. In terms of political reporting, were your involved in anything more than letters to the Ambassador which would be incorporated into his own reporting program, as he saw fit?

JONES: No. I envisaged my responsibility in Port Said as establishing the best possible, most informative contacts with the British and the French, but primarily with the Egyptians. Possibly as a result of lessons I had learned in Libya, I think that I had a considerable amount of success in doing that, although I was reprimanded mildly by Bill Burdett, who

was sitting on the Egyptian desk, because I never took any trips into the Sinai [Desert area]. He thought that I should have done more cruising around the consular district. That was the way he perceived it. But in any case I do think that I was able to supply the Ambassador with information that he found valuable. At least he said so, according to [Foreign Service Inspector Bernard] Gufler, who inspected our post while I was in Port Said.

Q: Then your consular district included the Sinai and what else?

JONES: The Canal Zone and the Sinai.

Q: At that time was there anyone much to see in Sinai?

JONES: 50,000 or 100,000 Bedouins.

Q: They wouldn't have been very significant. The main activity was in Port Said.

JONES: That's where the action was, sure.

Q: You've mentioned previous problems with the British in Libya. By that time, when you were in Port Said, had their view "evolved"? Were they prepared to accept an American presence—American consular or political officers, doing political reporting, contacting Egyptians and so on, perhaps without their knowledge?

JONES: There were certain elements in London who were very unhappy with [Ambassador] Caffery because Caffery had immediately established close relations with the Nasserist clique, even though the takeover was a total surprise to us. Nasser and company had to scratch around to find an American whom they knew by sight, so that they could establish contact with the [American] Embassy [in Cairo]. I believe that they found an Assistant Military Attach# who had run into a couple of them at some affair or other. However, after the Nasserist takeover, [Ambassador] Caffery, primarily through Bill Lakeland, who was subsequently "selected out" [of the Foreign Service] because of

Bob Strong's intervention, had established close and friendly relations with the Nasserist regime. [This approach to Nasser] had created opposition back in London, to the extent that they were incensed—at least the Conservative faction was.

However, I didn't suffer from this in Port Said. I had very friendly relations with Colonel Popham and Colonel Clift, who were the top British officers, as I recall, in the Canal [Zone] at the time. As a matter of fact, Popham was very forgiving when I made one serious mistake.

Q: What was that?

JONES: I had called on all of the Egyptian officials I could find. One was a very urbane old general named Ahmad Salim, who was the head of the Coast Guard in the Canal Zone. Ahmad Salim phoned me some time after I had visited him and said he'd like to invite me to a party. He said he'd call for me at such and such a time. I was delighted and said that I'd be happy to go.

So he picked me up, and we went to the party, which turned out to be held in a main street of Port Said, under a vast canopy or tarpaulin—a tent, in effect—attended by several hundred Egyptians inside the tent and several thousands outside in the street.

Q: Sounds like the makings of a riot.

JONES: Exactly. I was placed in the main section between Gen. Ahmad Salim and the Governor of the Canal. So the next day the Port Said press, in French and Arabic, featured the American Consul, sitting between these two officials at this rally held to encourage the British to leave the Canal.

Q: But you didn't know that in advance.

JONES: I had no warning whatsoever. If I had been more sophisticated, I would have realized what they were setting me up for. [Laughter]

Q: There was no advance publicity, and yet there must have been some means of assembling all these people.

JONES: Well, of course, the Egyptian Government had no difficulty whatsoever in just "putting the word out" to their cliques and claques. [They would say], "We're getting together in such and such a town and place."

I subsequently explained this to Colonel Popham. He said, "Oh, so that's how they got you there." He never said anything more.

Q: He understood. He had probably been caught a couple of times in the same kind of thing.

JONES: It's possible.

Q: This particular incident happened when?

JONES: All I can say is that it was fairly early on in my tour [in Port Said]. I would say that it was in 1953.

Q: Then, over the period 1953 to 1956 the British were evacuating troops [from the Canal Zone]. Didn't they have civilian contractors to keep up some aspects of a British presence in the Canal Zone?

JONES: Well, there was a vast myth propagated by the British and French that piloting ships through the Suez Canal required years of training and that it was an area of expertise for which no Arabs were qualified. This myth was exploded after Nasser nationalized the Canal in 1956.

Q: I had heard and accepted this myth, as I didn't know any better.

JONES: Well, there are certain tricks to piloting a ship in the Canal. When you're in a canal, in order to turn right, you steer left because the waves pile up beside that bank of the canal. But once you know that little trick, all you do is just steer your way down the canal. The Suez Canal has no locks. No problem.

Q: At this point, when you were in Port Said, was Jefferson Caffery the Ambassador [to Egypt] during the whole period or...

JONES: Yes, my recollection is that he and I left together.

Q: My first post in the Foreign Service was in Havana, where [Caffery] had served several times. I think that he served as chief of mission longer than anyone else.

JONES: He may have been in the “Guinness Book of Records” for that, though I'm not sure. Henry Byroade hung on [as chief of mission] for an amazingly long period of time, but I don't think...

Q: I think that Jefferson Caffery may still hold the record. Did you have any particular impression of his style of operating a mission? Did he get deeply involved in all aspects of the mission or did he leave it to the section chiefs? Or were you that closely connected to the matter?

JONES: His DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] for most of the period was Lewis Jones. I suspect that Lewis Jones “ran” all of the sections of the Embassy, except the Political Section. I'm not sure of the extent to which he [Caffery] was involved in the Political Section. Caffery operated with Nasser through his [military] attach#s and through Bill Lakeland, a young officer of my generation and an Arabist. I can remember Mary Jo saying when I went to a reception...

Q: Who was Mary Jo?

JONES: Bill Lakeland's wife. We went to a reception at the Embassy. We were invited quite often to Embassy affairs when we were in Cairo. I said [on this occasion] to Mary Jo, “Where's Bill?” She said, “He's closeted with the Ambassador.” Bill was a very able officer and a good friend of mine. I was sorry that his career was shortened by events in Baghdad later on. So I would say that [Ambassador] Caffery kept a finger on the political pulse but probably wasn't terribly interested in the rest of [the activities of the mission].

Q: Then you finished your two-year tour, in Port Said. Was this a two-year tour because of health conditions or isolation—or was it simply a long-standing practice?

JONES: In those days—at least in my area—it was the practice to move people quite often. I left Beirut after a year and a half, I left Port Said after two years. I was saved, I think, from selection out [of the Foreign Service] by Bernard Gufler, a [Foreign Service] inspector, [though] I was promoted a year or two after all of my contemporaries. I went back to INR.

Q: How did your INR assignment come up? Had you asked for an INR assignment?

JONES: No way! In those days service in INR was looked on by the average “line officer” [in the Foreign Service] overseas as being practically Outer Mongolia.

Q: I think that it was about this time that Foreign Service Officers began to move into INR.

JONES: That's right. It was part of the “integration program.”

Q: INR had previously been staffed mainly with civil service people.

JONES: That's correct.

Q: I went to INR in 1956—a little after you did. By that time there were lots of FSO's assigned there.

JONES: Well, I fought the system in 1955. At that time Charlton Ogburn was the director of the Near East or NEA part of INR. I said that I didn't want this job [in INR]. I said that I didn't think that I was qualified for it. I'd never been a research type and I wanted to go back to the field. I even tried to trade on my acquaintance with [Ambassador] Harlan Clark, who was in Personnel at the time. But Harlan said “No,” flatly. He said, “We are integrating the Service. Foreign Service Officers are going to have to take these jobs, which were formerly 'home service' and GS [General Service, a civil service designation] jobs, and you're going to take the job.” So what I had succeeded in doing was merely “blotting my copybook” insofar as INR was concerned. Bob Baum had asked me to come back [to INR], primarily because of the reporting that I had done from Tripoli. He was the head of the North African section of Ogburn's Near East office, whatever it was called in those days.

But I finally managed to get myself transferred out of the African section of INR and to go to work for Harold Glidden in the Near East section of INR. This was a valuable experience. However, while I was in the Near East section of INR, we received an ostensibly casual inquiry from the [Executive] Secretariat [of the Department], namely, “How important, politically, to Nasser is the Aswan High Dam?”

Q: What year was this?

JONES: This was in the spring of 1956. We were given only two or three days [to answer this question]. I don't recall whether we were allowed to query the Embassy [in Cairo] on this. Whether the desk [in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs] queried the Embassy, I don't know. We in INR were asked for our opinion as to whether the high dam had a high ranking on Nasser's list of political priorities.

So what I did was to go through Embassy Cairo's daily translations of the Cairo press. Our conclusion was that [the relative priority of building the high dam] was “not high.”

Q: You mean that it was a high dam but was not of high importance. [Laughter]. There already was a dam there, wasn't there?

JONES: Oh, yes, a low dam, but at a different location.

Q: It wasn't simply built higher.

JONES: No. I suspect that there are a few miles between them. I don't know, although I have been there. I suspect that the old dam is downstream from the high dam. So we sent an answer to the Secretary which said, “The Aswan High Dam is a permanent element of the regime's propaganda, but it is not all that big a deal, insofar as Nasser's political status is concerned.”

Q: Were you aware, at that time, of any application by Nasser for a major, large-scale loan in connection with the construction of the high dam?

JONES: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, during the previous fall [1955] the U. S. and the U. K. had already agreed to provide major financing to Nasser for the high dam. This bears on the use of intelligence. I spent a total of seven years in intelligence. As a matter of fact...

Q: Mainly in INR, or...

JONES: In INR. It's rather ironic that Charlton Ogburn, [the director of the Office of Near Eastern Analysis in INR], was quite restrained in his analysis of my [work] performance in 1955-57 in INR. Subsequently, some 20 years later, I took over his job. In any case, the use of intelligence is a subject which has interested me and on which I have written [articles]. The mistake, I think, that was made by the Secretariat was in not giving INR all of the relevant data. In asking for the importance of the high dam they didn't tell us

the reason that they asked this question was that they were getting ready to pull the rug out from under Nasser. So a few days after we gave our response to the question the Department of State went public and said that we have concluded that the Government of Egypt and the Egyptian economy are not competent to carry out a project of that magnitude. So, consequently, we were withdrawing the aid [which had been promised].

Q: Did they use the term "competent"?

JONES: It was as blunt as that. What they didn't say was why they were withdrawing the aid. The real reason was, first of all, that Nasser had already upset Dulles and company in the fall of 1955 by accepting Soviet arms. Secondly, and more recently, in the spring of 1956, Nasser had recognized Communist China. So Dulles decided that this was just absolutely unacceptable. This is the inference we all drew. Consequently, Nasser had to be taught a "lesson." And the quickest way, right off hand, was to withdraw the aid for the dam.

Q: What was the British view at this time? Did they agree with Dulles or...

JONES: Very much so. As I recall, Eden was Prime Minister by this time. Eden was strongly anti-Nasser, as we will see later when we speak of the 1956 War. A few days after the aid [for the construction of the Aswan high dam] was withdrawn, came the bombshell. Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. As I said earlier, I, of all people, having served two years in the Canal Zone, should have realized that this was his option. But I did not have the expertise. I believed the myth that the Egyptians could not operate the canal. And God knows that they needed the income from the canal for their somewhat feeble economy.

Q: I believed this myth, too. Do you think that [Nasser's] response was calculated or was it primarily emotional?

JONES: Let me put it this way. Undoubtedly, Nasser was laying plans for the total Egyptian takeover of the Suez Canal at some point. The Convention [the treaty covering

the administration and use of the Canal] gave the Suez Canal Company exclusive control of the canal until the late 1990's, I think—long after the Egyptians actually took over. I'm sure that Nasser didn't plan to wait that long. But I suspect that he may have moved his timetable forward to retaliate against the Americans, because that was the revolutionary "persona" [speaking].

Q: He felt that he had to do something.

JONES: Yes, and this was a very convenient thing to do. As it happened, it was a very feasible, pragmatic thing to do because the British and French pilots said, "OK, we're walking off the job. That's going to be tough on you Egyptians."

Q: They believed it, too.

JONES: They believed their own propaganda. Of course, Nasser immediately brought in pilots from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—and from heaven knows where else. They started training Egyptian pilots as fast as they could, and the canal continued to operate.

Q: There was never any holdup [in shipping passing through the canal].

JONES: No, not that I recall.

Q: You were also working in INR on countries other than Egypt.

JONES: Egypt and the Sudan were my two countries. The Sudan was not of any great significance to the U. S. at this time.

Q: Did we have a Consulate in Khartoum by then?

JONES: Oh, yes. Bill Burdett had opened [the Consulate] up, and it had become an Embassy, I think, by then. Lowell Pinkerton had served there as Ambassador. I remember

that he said to someone, “It's amazing what a man will do to keep a job.” He took the job of Ambassador in Khartoum.

But getting back to Egypt, the summer of 1956 was a welter of negotiations and backing and filling about how we would resolve this, because we would not recognize the Egyptian takeover of the Canal. We insisted that the rights of the Suez Canal Company be recognized and respected. So finally British Prime Minister Anthony Eden, in collusion with France and Israel, decided that they would carry out this giant “scam,” whereby Israel would invade the Sinai [Desert] and advance to the Canal. Then the British and the French ostensibly would intervene to separate the combatants, that is, separate the Egyptians from the Israelis. These three outside parties had planned all of this in advance.

I've just finished reading a very interesting newspaper article, when I was going through old files, which said that Eden was operating on a totally false premise. [Reportedly], he had been informed by [Sir Harold] Macmillan, who had come back from Washington, that [President] Eisenhower would have no objection if the British invaded the Canal Zone and attempted to reestablish Western control of the canal. According to the article, Macmillan was being totally duplicitous in this. He wanted Eden to “fall on his face” on the Canal [issue], and Macmillan could then replace Eden [as Prime Minister].

Q: I think that there was an interesting, personal interplay here. I didn't know any of these people personally but I've read about it a little bit. First of all, Eden was in very poor health in 1956.

JONES: That's right.

Q: He had been operated on at, I think, the Leahy Clinic in Boston some time in 1955.

JONES: Yes.

Q: I was in Singapore then and I remember that some of the British in Singapore said, “Oh, the Americans took all the guts out of Eden!” [Laughter]. He was in poor health in 1956. Later on Hugh Thomas, the British historian, wrote a little book on Suez—I don't know if you've ever seen it.

JONES: No.

Q: It's a very good book. I have a paperback version of it, which I'll send on to you. I think that Thomas' basic conclusions were quite right. Eden ran a continuing temperature of over 100 degrees for the six months before he resigned. All during this crisis he was running a temperature. If you've got a temperature, every day, of over 100 degrees, you're not in very good health, and this has got to have an impact on you.

JONES: That's very interesting. Well, I think that Eisenhower and Dulles probably thought that the British and French were going to make a show of force in Cyprus, for example, with the intention of intimidating the Egyptians. Eden's strategy suffered from one, essential defect, and that was that he had not gotten the Americans “on board.” According to this article that I mentioned, as soon as Eisenhower “got the word,” he telephoned Eden. Eisenhower, thinking that he was talking to Eden, said, “Are you out of your mind?” In fact, he was talking to one of Eden's aides. Eisenhower was hostile to the whole enterprise and destroyed it by withdrawing economic support for the British. I don't know to what extent the Hungarian revolt influenced the timing of the operation [against the Suez Canal].

Q: I don't think that it had anything to do with it.

JONES: Didn't it occur before?

Q: No, I don't think so. These two crises happened more or less simultaneously.

JONES: The press was saying [at the time] that the Israelis, at least, felt that the Americans would be so absorbed in Eastern Europe that they could continue to carry out whatever operations they had in mind. Well, this whole thing was a disaster. It was one of the few instances in modern history when the United States has actually put pressure on close allies, namely, the U. K. and France, as well as on Israel. In the spring of 1957 Eisenhower—this has never come out in "open sources," as far as I know—told the Israelis that economic pressure would be used, as necessary, to get them to withdraw from Sinai and Gaza. [Prime Minister] Ben Gurion said, "We'll never withdraw from Sinai." Then he did. [Then Ben Gurion] said, "We'll never withdraw from Gaza." Then he did. One account has it that Eisenhower even threatened to withdraw the tax exemption for American private donations to Israeli charities.

Q: That's a serious threat! Well, we could go on at length about the 1956 Anglo-French affair at Suez. I don't think it's been well described or analyzed even yet. But that is not our purpose today. You were then in INR, working on Near Eastern affairs. When did you leave INR?

JONES: 1958. I was in a car pool with Bill Lakeland, Dick Parker, and Peter Chase, who were all Near East hands. All of us went out to the field at roughly the same time.

Q: Where did you go from Washington?

JONES: [The Embassy in] Damascus.

Q: How did you learn about your assignment to Damascus or did it come "out of the blue"?

JONES: "Out of the blue." [The assignment] was not negotiated. However, as it happened, it was the best assignment I ever had, as far as I was concerned. It was just about six months after Syrian-Egyptian union had been proclaimed, under Nasser's leadership.

Q: So this was the UAR.

JONES: Yes. The United Arab Republic. It was also about a year after the notorious Rocky Stone affair in Damascus.

Q: Could you explain what that was? This would be the Rocky Stone affair in 1957.

JONES: In 1957 in Damascus. Rocky Stone, I believe, was the [CIA] Chief of Station. He had established contact with some of the officers of the Syrian Army, with the objective of promoting a change of regime and overthrowing Abdul Hamid Serraj, who was the “power center” [in Syria] at the time. He had been the head of G-2 [Syrian Army Intelligence] and had emerged as the strong man in Syria. The officers with whom Stone was dealing took his money and then went on television and announced that they had received this money from the “corrupt and sinister Americans” in an attempt to overthrow the legitimate government in Syria. Rocky Stone was expelled from the country, as well as his “confederate,” Colonel Molloy(?), the Army Attach#. As I understand it, Colonel Molloy(?) was not involved [in the attempted recruitment], but they threw him out because they didn't like him. They thought that he was too inquisitive.

By the time I arrived in Damascus, around July, 1958, the climate was so suspicious and hostile to Americans that it was very, very difficult for anybody to profess to be a political reporting officer. No Syrians dared to be seen with an American, except in the most inoffensive of circumstances and for valid reasons. So what we had to do, over a period of some years, was to cultivate Syrians in innocuous contexts, such as on the tennis court and that sort of thing. Even socially, it wouldn't work. You couldn't invite Syrians to your house.

Q: You saved money on your representation allowance.

JONES: That's true. On the whole, Syrians are a very outgoing and gregarious people. And as time went on, the situation improved. We took actions which some people might have considered to be fawning on the Syrians. For example, after Damascus was raised to

be an Embassy, Ambassador Ridgway Knight walked in the funeral procession for Abdul Hamid Serraj's brother, I think it was. We did things like that. As a result, after I'd been in Syria for four years, we had pretty good relations with the Syrians. This also coincided with an era of good feeling with the Russians. We were all invited to the Soviet Embassy for caviar and blinis in about 1960.

When I arrived [in Damascus], the post was technically a Consulate General, because Syria had become the northern region of the UAR. Not long after I arrived, Pete [Parker T.] Hart, who was to have been Ambassador to Jordan, was switched to Damascus, because Jordan, in response to the [establishment of the] UAR, had incorporated itself in theory [into a union] with Iraq. Jordan, as such, no longer existed. So Pete became the Consul General in Damascus under Ambassador Ray Hare. Pete Hart was a superior chief of mission and was also a “driver.” He believed in 12-hour days, six days a week.

Q: Was there really that much work to do?

JONES: Not really, because what happened in Syria did not seem to have any immediate, direct relevance to American interests in the Middle East. Syria had no known oil resources at that time.

Q: Syria has some trade [with the U. S.]—Latakia tobacco, I suppose.

JONES: I believe the IPC [Iraq Petroleum Company] pipeline was operating in those days. There really wasn't much trade. Syria was of interest simply as a center of “agitation” and political ferment. One major element of Damascus' political reporting was data on the infiltration of arms to the anti-Chamoun forces in Lebanon. The Syrians always like to talk about Damascus as the “beating heart” of the Middle East. No matter what their factions, the Syrians have always considered that Palestine, Iraq, and Lebanon are all parts of the traditional Syria and that Syria should be the leader of that area. The first year or two [of my service] in Syria, 1958-59, was a period of rebuilding, as far as the Americans were concerned. We were trying to overcome more than the Rocky Stone episode. There had

been other things, too. For example, we had financed arms purchases by Armenians who buried them in Syria. The Syrian G-2 had discovered these. This was another source of awkwardness. However, the path to better Syrian-American and Egyptian-American relations was also smoothed by Charles Yost, who, in my view, was one of the outstanding officers in the [Foreign] Service.

Yost had been appointed Ambassador to Syria when the union of Syria and Egypt was proclaimed. Nasser was still in bad odor in Washington in those days, and it would have been convenient and popular if Ambassador Yost had proposed that we resist the establishment of the UAR. Instead, Ambassador Yost, who might have concentrated on promoting his own position and career, chose instead to put in writing a recommendation that the United States “get behind” the UAR and try and do business with Nasser—and forget the resentment that we had felt toward Nasser at the time of the nationalization of the Suez Canal.

Ambassador Ray Hare, in Cairo, implemented this policy, and it was continued through my tour of duty in Damascus, which lasted until 1962 and on into the first year or two of my [subsequent assignment] to Washington.

Q: This was the period after John Kennedy came in as President in 1961. Dulles had died, I think, in 1958. So in a sense these events made it possible to put an end to some of these problems back in the past.

JONES: That is correct. As a matter of fact, John Kennedy appointed Phillips Talbot as Assistant Secretary for NEA [Near Eastern Affairs]. Under Talbot, Jack Jernegan was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Near Eastern Area. However, the real policymaker for Near Eastern Affairs in the early 1960's, oddly enough, was Bob Strong, [Director of the Office of Near Eastern Affairs]. He went out to Baghdad as Ambassador thereafter. He was dedicated, to the point of fanaticism, in two ways: he worked seven days a week. When he became Director of NE [Office of Near Eastern Affairs], he bought

or rented an apartment within walking distance of the Department [of State]. He left his family up at Carlisle, PA, where he had been on the faculty of the Army War College. In effect, he just assigned himself to the Department of State, body and soul, for the three or four years that he was in this job. They asked him later on to become a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, but he declined. He preferred to remain as the Director of NE.

He was also dedicated to the concept of doing business with Nasser. Essentially, in the early 1960's, doing business with Nasser meant [providing] PL 480 [surplus agricultural commodities assistance to Egypt]. Now, when Pete Hart became Ambassador to Turkey, he was succeeded by Borden [”Bob”] Reams, who was Consul General [in Damascus] for a year or so before he went to take over four Embassies in West Africa. At that point, in September, 1961, the conservative elements in Syria rebelled and took Syria out of the UAR. This was of some personal interest to my family because practically the only military action which took place during this rebellion was an attack by Haydar al Kuzbari's desert troops on the residence of Abdul Hakim Amer. In Damascus Amer was Nasser's “proconsul,” so to speak. He was running the northern region [of the UAR]. [Amer's] residence was defended by Palestinians, because the Egyptians didn't really trust the Syrians. Most of the Palestinian defenders [of Amer's residence] died in their tracks in and around that residence. Our apartment was on the other side of the street.This was not totally unexpected...

Q: Did the phone service operate all during this time?

JONES: It operated very well.

Q: So you could keep in touch with the Embassy.

JONES: That's exactly what happened. The firing started around 4:30-5:00 AM. I was on the phone to the Embassy. Ridgway Knight, who was then Consul General [in Damascus],

managed to make it from his residence to the Consulate General in two or three minutes. So I told Knight that there was heavy firing outside, the old French “Staghound” cars...

Q: You mean French-made armored cars.

JONES: Armored cars, right, as far as we could tell. We were in a basement apartment and we could see out of the narrow windows.

Q: So you had pretty good protection. You were sort of under ground.

JONES: They were not shooting at our residence in any case. They were shooting at Amer's residence. So I was able to keep Knight roughly informed about what was happening. I said, “Obviously, it's an attack on Amer's residence.” At that time I had no idea of the extent of the insurrection. But, as it turned out, that was all they had to do. There were no major Egyptian troop elements in Syria. Therefore, throwing Egyptian rule off was no problem whatsoever.

Q: I suppose that Nasser could have sent troops to Latakia to try to affect the outcome. I gather that he decided not to do that.

JONES: He decided not to. Militarily, it would have been extremely difficult, particularly if Israel, which sat between the two regions [of the UAR] had decided to obstruct [such a movement of Egyptian troops] in some way. So Nasser decided that the Syrian-Egyptian union was over, even though Egypt continued to call itself the UAR for a few more years.

Q: Didn't Syria and Egypt get together again for another version of the UAR?

JONES: They kept talking about it, but it never actually happened.

Q: Now one other thing that we didn't touch on is that, in July, 1958, as I recall, the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown. Did that have an impact on you at all?

JONES: Yes, but only in a sense. We talked to some of the Syrians who were trapped in Baghdad at the time of the overthrow. That was another bloody, frenzied affair, like the affair in Alexandria in January, 1952. A number of people died. Several of the Syrian [diplomats], even though they were Arabs, left in fear of their lives. This was when Nuri Said [the Prime Minister of Iraq at the time] dressed himself as a woman and attempted to flee. As I recall, King Faisal [the king of Iraq] was killed.

Q: Yes, that's right. Wasn't this the initial appearance of the Baath Socialist Party as the party in power?

JONES: The party which took over in Baghdad was a coalition of two or three parties, in which the Baath evolved as the leader. Abd al-Salaam 'Aref, was the original figurehead [leader] in Iraq. He didn't last too long. Eventually, our “friend,” Saddam Hussein, became influential behind the scenes, even that far back, I believe.

Q: Did the events in Iraq have any impact on the situation in Syria?

JONES: Not really. Syrian politics after World War II and until the union with Egypt were essentially a function of Iraqi-Egyptian rivalry. Syrian governments seemed to alternate between pro-Iraqi and pro-Egyptian regimes. The situation oscillated in that way until the union with Egypt, which was in effect for three or four years. The overthrow of the “Intifada al Mubarakah”, as the Syrians called it, was not a total surprise to the Embassy, because various straws had appeared in the wind. We had sent a cable to Washington two or three weeks [prior to the event], saying that conditions were ripe for an ouster of the Egyptians. After the Egyptians were thrown out, Syria became an independent country once again. The Syrian faction of the Baath gradually reestablished control, even though the term “Baath” [Socialist Resurrectionist Party] became less and less meaningful as a classification. For example, Hafiz al-Asad, the present dictator of Syria, came to power through the Baath, but he's a very different person than Saddam Hussein, the present

dictator of Iraq, who also came up with the Baath. Assad is a member of the Alawite faction in Syria.

The Baath was originally devised by two leading theoreticians, Michel Aflaq and Salah Bitar, Aflaq being Greek Orthodox and Bitar being a Sunni Muslim. So what the Baath is depends on who is waving the flag at the time. In 1962 Ralph Barrow was the Officer in Charge of Syrian-Egyptian Affairs—they were still kept together in NEA, even though the UAR no longer existed. I went back [to Washington] to be his deputy.

Q: How did that assignment come about? Was this negotiated or did it come as a surprise?

JONES: I suspect that Bob Strong and Ridgway Knight were looking toward an eventual replacement for Barrow. I had no [advance] knowledge of this [assignment] whatsoever...

Q: So they didn't discuss it with you.

JONES: No, they didn't discuss it with me at all. I just suspect that they said, “Well, Jones looks like a logical replacement for Barrow. Barrow is due to go out [to the field soon].” I went back as his deputy, replaced him a year later, and Barrow went out as Consul General to Aleppo. Q: So you were in Washington on the Syrian desk from...

JONES: 1962 to 1965. I was deputy for a year and then was Officer in Charge of Egyptian-Syrian Affairs. Immediately, my primary concern shifted from Syria to Egypt, because the cornerstone of American policy in the Middle East, insofar as the Arabs were concerned, was cooperation with Egypt. That cooperation was based on [the shipment of] PL 480 [surplus agricultural commodities], that is, the supply of wheat to Egypt on very benevolent terms. This was Bob Strong's favorite policy. He was the “champion” of PL 480 [commodities] for Egypt and doing business with Nasser.

This all changed more suddenly than we realized, with the assassination of President Kennedy [in 1963]. I can remember standing in Phillips Talbot's office, watching the television the day of the assassination [November 22, 1963]. I think that Talbot knew right then and there that he was on his way out. He subsequently became Ambassador to Greece, where he got caught up in the wheels of Greek-American politics. Bob Strong went out as Ambassador to Baghdad. Rodger Davies, who had been Strong's deputy, took over [as Director of the Office of Near Eastern Affairs]. Rodger Davies is a very interesting figure. Before his death from a sniper's bullet in Cyprus he was marked “for stardom” [in the Department of State]. Everybody always felt that here was a man who “had it all.” He had the talent, the drive, and, most of all, the ability to get along with people. Except that he didn't get along with Strong. Strong was a megalomaniac and didn't have much patience with people who, first of all, didn't work his hours, and, secondly, didn't see things the way that he did and whose minds didn't work the way his mind worked. For some reason [Bob Strong] and Davies didn't get along. However, Davies was so well established in the Department that he was able to replace Strong in any event.

With the advent of President Lyndon Johnson to the White House, in retrospect it becomes apparent that American Middle East policy did almost a 180 degree [turn].

Q: Do you think that this was a deliberate [decision]? In the case of Lyndon Johnson he knew almost nothing about the Middle East and had had no historical contact with it, except possibly to the extent of supporting Israel. But all of the American Presidents did that.

JONES: Well, I am going to express a point of view which some would consider overly conspiratorial. I think that, first of all, foreign policy is made in the White House. Above all, foreign policy on a crucial issue like Israel is made in the White House.

Q: Because of the electoral considerations?

JONES: That's right. And whereas [President] John Kennedy felt secure enough that he could “play” the “Nasser card,” without losing too much electoral support in the United States...

Q: You mean Jewish support?

JONES: Yes, or at least pro-Israeli support—Jewish and also fundamentalist Christian support, because there are millions of fundamentalist Christians in the South of this country who feel that Israel is the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, even though they expect that the Jews, on the Day of the Resurrection, will be converted into Christians.

President Johnson may or may not have felt less secure than Kennedy. I suspect that he felt less secure because Washington, when he became President, was full of Kennedy supporters, like Bill Moyers, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Bobby Kennedy, and the rest, who all...

Q: I remember them. They sneered at President Johnson, and they didn't make much of an effort to hide it, either.

JONES: Exactly. They had strong antipathy for Johnson. With one exception—Dean Rusk who, to my mind, though an “inferior” Secretary of State, was a “superior” operator in the bureaucratic environment. He took special pains, while he was Secretary of State during the Kennedy administration, to keep Johnson in the picture. Johnson appreciated that. So Dean Rusk was one Kennedy appointee whom Johnson retained, which I think was unfortunate.

After President Johnson took over, it became time for the PL 480 program [with Egypt] to be renewed. The Egyptian Ambassador in Washington, Mustafa Kamel, was a “Stakhanovite.” He worked long hours. He had this dogged determination to work for his country, even though here he was—an “old regime” type, essentially—working for Nasser.

As a result, nobody had to work harder in the Department of State than the Egyptian desk officer, because the [Egyptian] Ambassador kept after him.

Q: That's pretty rare among Middle East ambassadors, isn't it? Many of them were "remittance men," weren't they?

JONES: Yes. The other [Middle Eastern] ambassadors were generally of no great consequence. They might be intelligent but they weren't dedicated, whereas Kamal would invite you out to his residence one day a week, he was frequently on the telephone, [but] he was appreciative. He'd give you a big farewell party when you left. But Kamal worked the hell out of you and he worked the hell out of the Department of State. So, as the existing PL 480 Agreement [with Egypt] drew close to expiration...

Q: That would be in 1964?

JONES: That would be in late 1963 or early 1964. Kamel used to ask for appointments with Secretary Rusk. Kamel and I would go up to see Rusk, and I would write the same old memcon [memorandum of conversation]. Kamel would say, "Mr. Secretary, time is getting short. We must renew this agreement. My country is in very serious need of this economic assistance. We are, after all, defending American interests in the Middle East."

Q: Was that true?

JONES: Yes, to a certain extent. Nasser was collaborating with us. He was certainly not rocking the boat with Israel. As a matter of fact, there's always been reason to believe that Nasser, having himself fought against Israel in 1948, was pragmatic insofar as a military contest with Israel was concerned. He was willing...

Q: He was wounded during the 1948 war [with Israel], wasn't he?

JONES: I believe he was, though I can't confirm it. In any case the Secretary's answer every time I went up there was essentially the same: "Mr. Ambassador, we are very

interested in preserving the warm ties between Cairo and Washington, but we are distressed by some of the policies of your country. For example, your military involvement in Yemen." Nasser had sent troops to support the [Yemeni] republicans against the forces of the Imam of Yemen, who was supported by Saudi Arabia. [The Saudis] really were our good friends. Furthermore, the Egyptians were involved in the Congo on behalf of [Prime Minister Patrice] Lumumba. I remember the Secretary bemoaning Egyptian involvement in the Congo.

However, as I look back on it now—I didn't know it then—I am convinced, without being able to document it, that the day that Lyndon Johnson was sworn into office as President of the United States, our Middle Eastern policy changed. I think that, first of all, he had close, pro-Israeli friends. For example, Arthur and Matilda Krim of New York City were frequent house guests at the White House. They were intimate friends of Lyndon Johnson's. In the second place Lyndon Johnson was basically a domestic politician. I have always felt—and Vietnam is your area, not mine—that he could have done better than he did in Vietnam. I certainly have no brief whatsoever for Johnson's Middle East policy, starting with the fact that our PL 480 program [in Egypt] began to grind to a halt.

Q: Well, to what extent was Egypt dependent for U. S. food under the PL 480 program? Was this contributing one-quarter or one-third or one-half or more? Was it all that substantial?

JONES: No. It was a great convenience to Nasser to be able to distribute wheat to his people, because Egypt has progressively become a "basket case" economically, starting back then—some 30 years ago. It's only gotten worse over the ensuing 30 years. However, in those days Egypt still had probably not consumed all of the foreign exchange saved during the monarchy. Egypt's economy used to be in fairly good shape, selling long staple cotton to mills in the U. K., and so on. So it wasn't a matter of life and death for Nasser, but it was a serious issue. And by the winter of 1964-65 I had finally woken up, smelled the coffee, and realized what was going on. Our policy of dealing with

Nasser was “dead.” Nobody had told me that. On the contrary, we had just drawn up an interagency [policy] paper under the direction of Bill Polk of the Policy Planning Council which reaffirmed our policy of collaborating with Nasser. You could see what that was worth, because meanwhile the White House was cutting our legs out from under us.

Q: Were the Israelis deliberately trying to bring this [PL 480 program] to an end? Did they want the United States to be on more “distant” terms with Egypt than we had been?

JONES: I think that there's no doubt that the Israelis “hated” American collaboration with Nasser...

Q: But we were never all that close to Nasser anyhow.

JONES: No, but Nasser, after all, supported the “fedayeen” in Gaza, the Palestinians, and —even though it was no more than verbal support—it was still a bad precedent. The view of the Israelis was that almost anybody in Egypt would be better for Israel than Nasser.

When we go on to 1967, I think that we can see that one Israeli objective was to humiliate Nasser and drive him out of office.

Q: Then you were on the [Egyptian] desk until...

JONES: 1965. So, during the winter of 1964-65 I realized what was going on and I made it known that I would like a transfer.

Q: Whom did you make this known to—directly to Personnel or...

JONES: To Rodger Davies, the Director of NE, and Harry Symmes, his deputy. Both of them were friends of mine—particularly Harry Symmes. In those days—perhaps not now —”policy” assignments originated primarily in NE and not in the Office of Personnel.

Q: I think that this was true all the way across the board in the Department.

JONES: That's interesting. Rodger and Harry had just written an efficiency report on me which noted the difficulty I seemed to have in producing memoranda in the form that they desired. I think that what they were alluding to was the fact that Jordan had requested jet fighters from the United States. The United States, up to that time, had never been a significant supplier of arms to any Middle Eastern country.

Q: Oh, we had that Tripartite Declaration back in 1950, wasn't it?

JONES: That was a terrible fraud. What in essence we had promised to do was that, if there ever were hostilities in the Middle East, [we would] act against the aggressor. This meant that, for example, if Syria had invaded Israel and Israel invaded Egypt, we would have been fighting for the Israelis on one end of the country and against the Israelis at the other end. The whole thing was...

Q: [Laughter]. That would have been an interesting operation.

JONES: But it's characteristic of our Middle East policy. It's never made any sense, as far as I know, since 1945. In any case, if we supplied jets to Jordan...

Q: What kind of jets were we talking about, when, in 1965? Would they have been F-4's?

JONES: I suspect that they were F-4's, right. If we promised to supply jet fighters to Jordan, that would not, in itself, have been very significant, because there was no prospect whatsoever of their being a threat to Israel. But, as soon as we established the precedent of sending American arms to the Middle East, then Israel was going to come in and ask for better fighters. Consequently, every time Rodger and Harry would say, “We've got to do a memo recommending the sale of jets to Jordan,” I would come up with a memo citing all the reasons why we shouldn't send jets to Jordan.

Q: So you weren't preparing the memos right? [Laughter]

JONES: So when I said that I'd like a transfer out of NE, they said, “OK, we'll see what we can do.” And sure enough, in mid-1965 I went to Aden as Principal Officer and Consul General, with the Consular District of Aden and the South Arabian Federation, which was another British colony in fact, if not in name, and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.

When I was transferred out of NE, I was not overjoyed about the assignment to Aden, because Aden, at that time, was going into a revolutionary phase of its own.

Q: A rather dangerous place, as a matter of fact.

JONES: It was. In fact, [the Department] subsequently sent me a bulletproof vest! Ironically, the man who sent it to me was Curt Moore, who died from machine gun fire from Palestinian terrorists in Khartoum in 1973. However, I also felt somewhat uneasy about leaving the Egyptian desk job to Earl Russell, who transferred from the Israeli to the Egyptian desk. I suspected that he was going to step into the same “swamp” from which I was now escaping. I didn't want to wish this on him, but on the other hand, I don't think that it would have been good for him if I went to him and said, “Earl, you're taking a job that's going to kill you.” [Looking back on it], I don't think that the job did him any good at all, but that's a personnel matter on which I was not consulted.

Q: Speaking of personnel matters, I presume, then, that your assignment to Aden was arranged directly by the Director of NE.

JONES: Oh, yes.

Q: As we said before, the Bureaus were in charge [of assignments to] all of the “key” jobs. Routine jobs may have been handled in Personnel, but the Bureau had a lot to say.

JONES: Well, they keep reorganizing the State Department, but “plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose.” [The more things change the more they remain the same.]

Q: Well, anyhow, the situation in Aden was a very dangerous one. An insurgency was building up and the British had considerable forces there.

JONES: Yes, I believe so.

Q: Did this insurgency mean that you had serious difficulty in moving around the city of Aden?

JONES: Not exactly. When I arrived, I began to sense from talking with the Adenis that there was a different view toward Americans than toward the British. It was my destiny that I served in three posts where I watched the British leave: Libya, Port Said, and Aden. Soon after I arrived, I concluded that the British efforts to create a political structure which would enable them to retain hegemony over South Arabia were totally fruitless—out of reach. Not only did I have this view, but 99% of the Adenis and South Arabians I talked to had this view. The exceptions, of course, were the Sultans and the people who were in office. However, a number of the British military and civilian officials there [held the same view that I did]. I'm not sure I ever heard a British military man admit this, but a number of very sharp, articulate British civilian officials—lawyers and bankers, people in the middle range of the civil service—agreed with me. They said [privately] that this was a lost cause and the sooner the British got out of there, the better.

Q: Who was the British High Commissioner, the senior man?

JONES: Turnbull was the High Commissioner for, I guess, all of my tour [in Aden]. I believe he may have been High Commissioner in Africa somewhere—possibly Kenya. Turnbull was a fine gentleman but definitely of the old school—quite conservative. I'm sure that he would have been horrified to realize what I was being told by some of the people in his administration.

The strategy of revolutionaries, as you know from your own service in Southeast Asia, is very often to go after [assassinate] the people most sympathetic to their cause. One of

the victims of this was Sir Arthur Charles who, I think, was the senior law officer in Aden. He was assassinated about a year after I arrived. I began to realize by this time that the “hard liners” had gotten control of the rebellion in South Arabia. But, as so often happens, a rebellion begins with the more moderate elements—and Abdullah Asnaj was the leader of that group. Then they are replaced by “hard line” elements, until finally, when the British were driven out, power accrued to some really “tough guys.” But they still weren't tough enough and were themselves thrown out by some even more bloody-minded types.

Q: Was this political constellation largely limited to the Aden area, was it being promoted by other Arab states, or were the communists involved in this at all?

JONES: There was some, peripheral support from Egypt, but essentially this was the republican faction in Aden and South Yemen—the same faction which Nasser supported militarily in Yemen.

Q: When did the Egyptians withdraw their forces from Yemen?

JONES: Of course, one of the reasons that they [the Egyptians] did so badly in the 1967 war was that, for reasons I'll never understand, Nasser stumbled into that war with 50,000 or 60,000 Egyptian troops in Yemen. They were withdrawn from Yemen about a year or so later.

Q: So this was well after the time you went to Aden.

JONES: Well after. I am not aware that any overt attempt was ever made to kill an American in Aden. A bomb was thrown at our compound and exploded. Two or three times teenagers tried to burn the lift vans of the departing Naval Attach#, which were sitting out in the street, in front of the Consulate General. So I took it on myself to assign a Marine to sit out there on the sidewalk and just keep the kids away. One night someone fired a gun from a hillside above the office. The bullet hit the wall about two feet from the Marine. I heard the shot and went down [to see what had happened]. I've never seen a

man so ashen-faced in my life [as the Marine guard]. I reported this to the Department. The Department cabled back and said, “You are not authorized to station Marines off the premises of the Consulate General.”

Q: The Marine was right in front of the Consulate General.

JONES: Well, he was in the street. So, from then on, anything that could be burned was “fair game,” although I think, in fact, that we lost nothing. The only casualty on my staff during the whole time that I was in Aden was my house boy, who was just walking down the street when a grenade was thrown at a passing British patrol. He was wounded. He got himself back to the Consulate General. I took him up to the British Hospital.

When I mentioned that I had witnessed the departure of the British from three different posts, I was very fortunate, personally, that the British were always extremely friendly and cooperative—able allies and friends. Of course, when I took my house boy to the hospital, they immediately got a doctor out and gave him A-1 medical attention. He came through this experience very well.

On only one occasion did I, myself, feel in danger from rebel activity. Of course, I had the same old difficulty that I had had in Syria in establishing private contact with locals, because I'm a foreigner and how do people know whether I'm passing the essence of their conversations with me on to the British. Obviously, I was on good terms with the British and was invited to all of their parties. I did go over to the Crater area [of Aden] to play tennis. The Crater area is a few miles farther into town from the Consulate General. On one occasion, when I left the tennis court, there was a man out in the street in Yemeni dress. As I got into the Consulate General car and started to back out, he came up close and pretended to direct traffic. I thought that this was a very peculiar way to act. Either the man was deranged or else he was going after me. So I walked back into the tennis court. As soon as he saw me go back inside, his expression changed and he disappeared. If

he was prepared to shoot me, he wasn't prepared to involve the Arabs with whom I was playing tennis. I don't know whether this was a [serious incident] or not.

Q: In any case, at the time you thought that you were in some difficulty.

JONES: The only other item of interest in Aden, from my personal point of view, was that the 1967 War occurred during my tour. One consequence for Aden was a minor insurrection among the South Arabian personnel among the British forces. There was some shooting, and there may have been some British casualties—I can't remember. There was quite a bit of unrest for a couple of days. Then, subsequently, a memorandum was circulated to all of the [Foreign Service] posts in the area, drafted in NE, as I recall, by Bill Crawford, who was at that time, I think, the officer in charge of the Israeli desk. This memorandum said [in effect] that the 1967 War is over and, although we regret all of the unpleasant ramifications, we think that we can safely say that we can put it behind us and that Arab-Israeli progress toward peace will continue.

I took advantage of my being principal officer at my own post to circulate to the Department and to most of the posts in the area a telegram stating my personal view that the Arab-Israeli War was not over, that the situation was going to get much worse before it got better, and that the consequences of the Israeli seizure of the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai, and the Golan Heights were going to be very severe. I can't remember if I referred, in the cable, to the fact that I had taken an orientation trip in 1965 when I was still officer in charge of the Syrian-Egyptian desk. At three Embassies—Cairo (under Ambassador Luke Battle), Baghdad (under Ambassador Bob Strong), and Damascus (under Ambassador Ridgway Knight)—I had posed to each Country Team the hypothesis that Israel would take the first, convenient opportunity to seize those territories. I had expected to be shouted down, but all three Country Teams were virtually unanimous in agreeing with me. They all anticipated it. So when it happened, the Middle East watchers were not surprised.

Q: Let me just go back to your position in Aden. How big a staff did you have there?

JONES: I had a Vice-Consul who also acted as a commercial officer. He and I would take turns in making visits to Muscat and Oman to check on activities over there. We also took turns visiting Salalah [Oman], where the old Sultan's palace was. I had three or four American personnel performing administrative functions, including a GSO [General Services Officer] and code clerks; and an Assistant Naval Attach#.

Q: Was there very much "routine" consular work there, by which I mean passport, visas, and so on?

JONES: There was a fair amount. The Vice-Consul spent one-third to one-half of his time on consular work, but some of it included shipping services, because Aden was and still is a major port.

Q: It was a major port at that time for ships that would "bunker" at Aden, because the prices were advantageous, as I recall.

JONES: Exactly. A big "bunkering" port.

Q: But the main focus of your work was political and consular.

JONES: Yes, though to some extent it was economic as well.

Q: You were in Aden then when the 1967 War began, and your perspective would be an interesting one, considering your background in the Middle East. What did you think of the circumstances under which the 1967 War began? Was it provoked? Was it a deliberate decision by Nasser or what?

JONES: First of all, since 1948 Israel has felt insecure and has felt an understandable compulsion to expand its defensive perimeter and to secure access to water sources from outside even the present boundaries of Israel. Consequently, if you look at the map of Israel, year after year, since 1948, you will find that, with occasional interruptions, like

in early 1957, when Eisenhower forced them to withdraw from Sinai, Israeli [territorial] hegemony has expanded. Today you have a Greater Israel which includes not only the tiny Israel they acquired under the UN partition resolution [of 1947] but the Israel that they conquered [later on] in 1948, plus the parts of Palestine that they picked up in 1967, the Golan [Heights], which they acquired in 1967, plus southern Lebanon up to the Litani River, the only major river in the whole area.

Secondly, American support for Israel and its expansionist program became increasingly blatant and increasingly strong throughout that period. If you examine American policies on any specific point, like, for example, Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories, you will find a very steady evolution in Israel's favor and to the disadvantage of the Arabs.

Already, by 1967, these two trends were well advanced—and they were obvious to Nasser. They were exacerbated by the break in economic relations between Egypt and the United States, which we have discussed...

Q: You mean the break in PL 480 aid.

JONES: The break in PL 480 aid. So Nasser was beginning to feel, naturally enough, a bit paranoid about Israeli expansion and about American support for such expansion.

Then, early in 1967 there was a concatenation of events, including a major air battle between Syria and Egypt. -Intermission-

Q: Well, we were discussing the causes of the 1967 War when we broke off the last time. I wonder if you'd carry on from there.

JONES: There had been a series of skirmishes along the Jordan River involving Syrian and Israeli competition for the control of the demilitarized zone and the water sources. And finally...

Q: This was mainly in the area of the Golan Heights? That was the only point where they touched, wasn't it?

JONES: [They touched] in the area of the Golan Heights, Lake Tiberias, and the area just south of Lake Tiberias.

Finally, in 1967 the long series of episodes and alarms and excursions culminated in an air battle between Israel and Syria. The Israelis shot down about six Syrian MiG's. At some point in the spring of 1967 Nasser concluded that Israel was planning an attack and that the attack was inevitable. So at some point during the next several weeks Nasser apparently decided that he would take some action to provoke the Israeli attack so that he would be able to go to the international community and say, “The Israelis are the aggressors.”

Now, of course, the identification of an “aggressor” in any situation is almost impossible because there are actions on both sides to which they can point. In 1982 Prime Minister Begin gave a talk in Israel in which he said that among the wars which Israel started intentionally was the 1967 War. From the Israeli point of view this was a necessary action because by June 5, 1967, Nasser had closed the Straits of Tiran and declared the Gulf of Aqaba closed to Israeli shipping. Obviously, of course, Israel could not afford to have its back door closed which led to the Red Sea.

The American position was very interesting at this time. President Johnson allegedly sent word through an emissary that the Israelis had a “green light” to go to war. This hasn't been proven, but there are sources that allege it. Furthermore, Stephen Green's book on the 1967 War and related Arab-Israeli activities alleges that the Americans gave the Israelis a reconnaissance plane a day before the Israeli attack. So there is considerable evidence that the Johnson administration was sympathetic to the Israeli initiation of hostilities and to the Israeli retention of territory as a result of those hostilities. The speculation is that Johnson was coming under increasing pressure in connection with

the war in Vietnam, and he hoped that support for Israel would mobilize pro-Israelis in the United States in support of his Vietnam operations. At least, this is the speculation.

The 1967 War itself was probably Israel's most decisive victory in all of the rounds of the Arab-Israeli war, and its ramifications, of course, in the succeeding decades have been considerable. At the moment, at the time of the [1967] War, there were the usual repercussions in the Arab world.

I was on the periphery at the time, down in Aden. But even in Aden there was a minor mutiny among the Arab forces of the [British-controlled] South Arabian Federation. It was a fairly unpleasant episode. As I recall, lives were lost, including some British personnel, and it took a few days to restore order in South Aden. But that is, of course, a side show, compared with the main event which left Israel in control of the Sinai, Gaza, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank [of the Jordan], which are still under vigorous contention as we speak, in July, 1994.

The Israeli seizure—when I say “Israelis” now, I'm talking about the hard liners in the Likud Party—of these territories was, in my mind, undoubtedly part of a long-range plan to take them and keep them. Whether they thought very much about the problem of the Arab population of the territories at the time, I don't know.

Israel now has a government led by the Labor Party. The Labor Party is making concessions which have been interpreted by the most optimistic observers as evidence that, over the long term, they [the Israelis] will be prepared to give the Palestinians actual autonomy in some parts of the Occupied Territories. Ambassador Hermann Eilts made a statement to this effect at the last meeting of the Middle East Studies Association which happened to be held here in the Research Triangle [Raleigh-Durham area of North Carolina] in the fall of 1993.

Q: Going back to the 1967 War, and the lead up to it, I take it, then, that you feel that the role of the Soviet intelligence report that the Israelis were mobilizing against Syria probably

was not all that significant. The Israelis were probably going to go to war in any case. Is that true?

JONES: That's my opinion. As a matter of fact—I may be repeating myself in saying that in the tour I took around the area during the winter of 1964-1965 I discussed the issue [of probable, forthcoming Arab-Israeli hostilities] in the various Country Team meetings in the embassies in Cairo, Baghdad, and Damascus. All three Country Teams were strongly of the opinion that the Israelis would take the first opportunity to seize Gaza, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights, for very obvious reasons: security and water.

I suspect that any Soviet intelligence reports were incidental to the Israeli action.

Q: You were in Aden when the 1967 War broke out. Is that right?

JONES: Right.

Q: When did you leave Aden?

JONES: I went back to the Naval War College in the fall of 1967.

Q: Did you know in advance that a war college assignment was coming up for you?

JONES: I was notified that I was detailed to the Naval War College. For personal reasons, I would much have preferred to go to the National War College [in Washington, D. C.]. I was unable to pull the proper strings, so I went to the Naval War College and found it a very valuable experience from two points of view.

First, we in the civilian bureaucracy don't see enough of the American military, which is a very significant element of our official establishment. Secondly, since most military attach#s [at our embassies] tend to be at the end of their careers and have lost their enthusiasm, we don't appreciate the talent that the American military possesses. But a tour [of duty] at any war college will correct you of that mistaken impression immediately.

Q: That was my own feeling about the Army War College, which I attended.

JONES: Right. Also, as I may have mentioned, I was surprised and pleased to find that there was a significant number of people at the Naval War College—probably not a majority—who, by the winter of 1967-1968 had become very critical or at least very skeptical of American policy in Southeast Asia. Whether they wanted us to do more or less [in that region], I'm not sure. But they felt that the existing policy had failed.

Q: You mean particularly the involvement in Vietnam?

JONES: Exactly.

Q: Well, of course, one of the problems was that all of our assumptions had been in terms of major hostilities in other areas and not primarily in Southeast Asia. As the resources moved to Southeast Asia, this uncovered situations elsewhere. I think that this was probably the view.

JONES: You know, this is a very interesting aspect of working in the field of political analysis. It is very easy to become so caught up in the problems of your own region and area of specialization that you lose any perspective whatsoever of equally serious problems in other areas. I suppose that there were very few people in the government who had an overall, global understanding of what was going on and how the events in Southeast Asia, for example, impacted on events in the Middle East, and vice versa.

Q: I think that that's absolutely true. I ran into this quite recently. I was reviewing my own involvement in Indonesia from about 1951 to about 1967. I began to realize that events [in Indonesia] which looked absolutely of major proportions were occurring simultaneously with totally unrelated events in the Middle East, where you were concerned. I simply wasn't aware that these events were happening at the same time. I think that only the people in the top command of the State Department would be really aware of this sort of thing.

JONES: If you are talking about the top command of the State Department, you had, on the one hand, Dean Rusk, who, in my opinion, made a career of cultivating whomever he happened to be working for. He supported the Vietnam enterprise long after it was a demonstrated failure. Below Rusk you had the house “dove,” George Ball, whose recent death I was sorry to read about and who, in my opinion, was almost always “right” on Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

Q: Well, of course, he had no interest in either of those areas. He was concerned about Western Europe, and anything else was a massive distraction. Of course, that's fair enough. If you look at the traditional view of American foreign policy, our main interest has been Western Europe. That's where most of [our ancestors] came from. Our tradition has been Europe-centered. We're moving quickly away from that now—more to the Far East, to some extent to the Middle East, because of the petroleum question, and, to some extent, to Africa for other reasons related to the increased role of blacks in American foreign policy.I think that you're quite right about the orientation of the people at the top [of the State Department]. They may not really think very much about what our basic orientations are. This makes it very difficult to keep things in perspective.

JONES: Well, I've had the feeling that the American people have not been too well served in Washington for the last several administrations. As a matter of fact, I tried to send the FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL a letter sparked by a comment that Bill Macomber had made in a previous issue about the excellence of American secretaries of state. I expressed the view that we hadn't had a good secretary of state, except for Cyrus Vance, in about 30 years. However, the JOURNAL wouldn't print it. The JOURNAL has become a very tame, “house organ”—it's always been that.

Q: I think it always has been. I never joined the Foreign Service Association, by the way...

JONES: Nor did I.

Q: I always felt kind of funny about it, but I thought that the FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL was entirely a "house organ" and that the people active in it were shamelessly promoting their own careers.

JONES: I'll tell you that my experience has been that, on occasion, an editor of the JOURNAL has stuck his neck out a little. But in every case, it's been chopped off. I had a rather provocative article accepted by Steve Dujack when he was editor of the JOURNAL, but he didn't last too much longer thereafter. Anne Luppi was editor of the JOURNAL. She was the daughter of our colleague, Hobart Luppi. Anne Luppi also lost patience. She wanted to be a little bit more adventurous, a little more provocative, but the Board [of the Foreign Service Association] wouldn't let her [do that].

Getting back to the 1967 War, I personally feel that I had been remiss in not having become aware, earlier on, of what was involved in the Vietnam question and the mistakes that were being made. I think that by the time I got to [the Naval War College in] Newport, I had come to realize that whatever we should be doing, we weren't doing.

Q: Well, there were a lot of arguments about it. Personally, I was deeply involved in the Vietnam War. I still feel that this was the right thing to have done, even though there were a lot of errors made in the execution of that policy.

JONES: Maybe I should interview you for a moment. [Laughter] How could we have avoided the humiliating defeat we suffered in Vietnam?

Q: Let me put it this way. We fought the war in the wrong place. We should have fought the war in North Vietnam. This was President Johnson's decision. He said, "We seek no wider war." Well, that's OK, but that's beside the point. When you go to buy tomatoes in the market, naturally you don't want to spend 50 cents if you can get them for 30 cents.

JONES: This was on the Korean War analogy, probably.

Q: Possibly so. But the point is, we were trying to protect the people of South Vietnam and were dropping bombs and firing artillery shells which came far too close to the people, many of whom were killed.

If the battle had been fought in North Vietnam, then, when the bombs hit the wrong place or the shells hit the wrong target, we were shooting at our enemies anyhow.

JONES: Then the obvious question is, what happens if the Chinese had come in?

Q: Well, that was a question which was faced at the time of the Korean War, too. I think that if we had stayed away from the Chinese-North Vietnamese border, we could have handled the matter fairly well. Was it worth fighting the war in Vietnam? Well, what is worth fighting for? I think that there were major questions of international order and security involved in Vietnam. Our failure in Vietnam directly led to the Gulf War. Saddam Hussein believed that the Americans are soft and would never be willing to accept casualties. He said this to Ambassador April Glaspie, as you recall. The situation in the former Yugoslavia is another example. We can't just posture, we can't just say things. Now we have to do things, because people think we're going to flinch. The same thing was true in Somalia.There was a major failure of top leadership in Vietnam, I think.

JONES: Speaking of failures, it's interesting that some people emerged from the Vietnam War with their careers enhanced, notably Phil Habib. Others were killed, like Coby Swank.

Q: Generally speaking, a failure does not promote anyone's career. Phil Habib was an exception to the rule. Joe Mendenhall did pretty well out of the Vietnam War. Some more junior guys, like John Negroponte and Dave Lambertson, also did well. I served with them in Saigon. But, generally speaking, you're quite right.

JONES: Going back to the Naval War College, was it the SS MAYAGUEZ that was seized in 1967 or 1968?

Q: The MAYAGUEZ was seized after the end of our involvement in Vietnam, in the summer of 1975.

JONES: Oh, then there was another ship—maybe it was the USS PUEBLO.

Q: Yes, the PUEBLO was seized off the coast of North Korea. In fact, the MAYAGUEZ is still around. I was up in Norfolk in July, 1993, and the MAYAGUEZ was being refitted there.

JONES: My classmates felt that we were “chicken” in the way we handled the PUEBLO incident. Anyway, as far as the Naval War College was concerned, there were some very fine people on the faculty. It struck me that some of the best men in the Department of Defense never made it beyond colonel or captain.

Q: We can carry this a little bit further. [Laughter]. Some of the best of our people never made Ambassador, as far as that goes.

JONES: I think that the best advantage of the Naval War College was that George Washington University at that time had an extension program there. I was able to get a master's degree in international relations simultaneously with the war college course. Subsequently, I'm told, the commandant of the Naval War College canceled that program.

In any event, after attending the Naval War College I was offered the choice between the Embassy at Beirut and Karachi, as political officer in either post. I had been a Middle East specialist and chose Beirut.

When I arrived in Beirut in June, 1968, all of a sudden it became the focus of the Arab-Israeli question, in the form of the Palestinians in the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization]. [Later on], in 1970, the PLO was expelled from Jordan. Lebanese politics became increasingly complicated in 1970 and 1971, when aircraft were hijacked in Jordan, and Syrian forces became involved in an abortive intervention in northern Jordan. Hafiz al-

Asad refused to provide air cover and he [came to power in Syria] in 1971. He has been the president of Syria for the past 25 years.

Q: When did the Lebanese Civil War get under way? Was it when you were there?

JONES: The PLO had been driven out of Jordan, after having been driven out of the West Bank. The Syrians were not about to allow a rival force to establish itself in Syria. The same was true of the Egyptians. But Lebanon was already in the throes of so-called "confessional" strife between essentially the Maronites and the Muslims, with some Greek Orthodox support.

Q: Wasn't there an agreement reached in 1943 or thereabouts concerning a division of power between the Christians and the Muslims [in Lebanon]?

JONES: There were three factors at work. The first factor is that some Lebanese emigrate—but they are mostly Christians. Factor No. 2 was that the Lebanese Muslims —particularly the Shiite—had larger families because they were lower on the economic scale. Factor No. 3 was that Palestinian refugees went to Lebanon. Although very few Palestinians acquired Lebanese citizenship, they were there, they were armed, and they were a force to be reckoned with.

Q: Then by the time you arrived in Lebanon [in 1968], the Muslims were far more numerous than the Christians, and the power sharing agreement of 1943 was no longer tenable.

JONES: No. As a matter of fact, even at the time when the National Covenant was reached [in 1943], I suspect that in the Lebanon carved out of Syria by the French the Christian majority was a very small one—maybe 55% [Christian] and 45% [Muslim], at best. Over the years, counting in the Palestinians, who were a force, even though they couldn't vote, I suspect that the Christians or Maronites were outnumbered, 2 to 1. So the

Embassy in Beirut became the major reporting post for the PLO problem during my tour there.

Q: Was PLO headquarters in Lebanon?

JONES: Yes, down in the refugee camps. There were a number of them. There were Sabra and Shatila in the [southern] outskirts of Beirut, and then there were bigger camps around Tyre and Sidon. I think that there were 12 or 13 [Palestinian] refugee camps in Lebanon. The total number of Palestinians in Lebanon was somewhere between 300,000 and 500,000 people.

Q: Was the internal situation in Lebanon calm enough so that you could move around the country?

JONES: At first, it was. It wasn't until after I left Lebanon that the Civil War really flared up.

Q: When did you leave Lebanon?

JONES: In 1971. The Christians never believed that the Americans would fail to intervene to ensure their retention of power. In 1958 Camille Chamoun, then President of Lebanon, asked the U. S. to intervene in Lebanon. We were shocked by the collapse of the monarchy in Baghdad [Iraq] and also by the fact that some of the Lebanese notables had gone over to Damascus to pay homage to Nasser, to the UAR. So we felt that we had to do something about this. In one of our typically moronic actions we sent troops to Lebanon.

Q: I understand that [our troops] were greeted at the beaches by kids selling Coca Cola and ice cream.

JONES: Well, sure. Nobody shot at us. The troops just sat there for a while. Then there was a negotiated settlement, and President Chamoun was replaced by President Shehab, who was, in effect, the representative of the pro-Nasserist faction in Lebanon. Not pro-

Nasserist to the extent that they were willing to join the UAR, but certainly not pro-Maronite. So that our troops, as far as I could see, had no effect whatsoever on the outcome in Lebanon.

Q: Of course, we didn't have any casualties, either. This happened in 1958, before your time in the Political Section in Lebanon. But it's interesting to explore the background of events a bit. It's curious to see that our involvement in Lebanon has run like a little red thread [in our Middle Eastern policy]—not always coherent, not always well planned, but it's there.

JONES: Well, our Middle East policy has never been coherent or well planned, ever since we had one. In fact, before World War II, the U. K. and France “ran” the Middle East. Our concern was to establish contact with the oil sheikhdoms. We just wanted to make sure that we had access [to the oil]. We still compete with the British. We have recently been fighting like mad with them over supplying the Saudis with aircraft. We won the contract to supply them with jet fighters.

In any case, I had a very competent staff in the Political Section [in the Embassy in Beirut]: Ed Djerejian handled Lebanese internal politics and Tom McAndrew handled refugee affairs and the PLO—although I helped him out on this subject. I did reporting on the PLO also, just as a kind of a hobby in addition to general political work. Tuck Scully was the general factotum of the Political Section. Finally there was Joe Twinam. Joe was supposed to have gone to Baghdad, but after the [overthrow of the monarchy], we had no post in Baghdad. So Joe Twinam was supposed to report on Baghdad from Lebanon. In fact, he had no job. There really wasn't that much to report on.

Q: Didn't we have a U. S. Interests Section in the Dutch Embassy in Baghdad?

JONES: Yes, but we had no Americans assigned. As far as Joe Twinam was concerned, I received a letter from Dick Murphy, who was in charge of NEA Personnel. Murphy said that NEA wanted to transfer Joe Twinam to Jeddah [Saudi Arabia]. I took this letter to

Ambassador Dwight Porter. He was and is a good officer and a fine gentleman, but he made a decision which I would not have made. He said, “We need Twinam in Lebanon.” In fact, Twinam was not fully occupied, but Ambassador Porter instructed me to write back to Dick Murphy. He said, “Don't say anything to Twinam. Write Dick Murphy and tell him that we need to keep Twinam.” So I wrote such a letter. We subsequently, as you can imagine, received a cable, transferring Twinam to Jeddah. [Laughter]. Twinam has never spoken very warmly to me since then.

Q: It was all your fault.

JONES: He probably found out what happened and thought that it was all my fault. Ambassador Porter was replaced by Ambassador Bill Buffum, who had been with USUN [the U. S. Mission to the UN in New York]. Then in 1971 I was transferred to INR as Director of the Office of Research and Analysis on the Middle East [RNA].

Q: Did you know that your assignment to INR was coming up? Had you been consulted?

JONES: No. I was recommended for INR by Dayton Mak, who had preceded me in Beirut as chief of the Political Section and subsequently was promoted to be DCM. When he left Beirut, Ambassador Porter brought Bob Houghton out from the Department to be DCM. Bob Houghton had been the desk officer for Lebanon. So Bob Houghton benefited from the same treatment that I had, when I went from the Embassy in Damascus to be the desk officer for Lebanon.

Q: This was kind of a pattern throughout your career. These assignments were made without reference to you.

JONES: Yes.

Q: This is the way it used to be. In many ways I always thought that it was a good system. Then, if you got an assignment that you didn't like, you could blame it on somebody other than yourself.

JONES: Once in a while, as I say, they gave me a choice. They gave me a choice between Karachi and Beirut.

So Ambassador Bill Buffum arrived in Lebanon. Later he brought Bob Oakley out. Bob Oakley had been on his staff in USUN and came out as my replacement. I have followed Bob Oakley's career in Somalia with interest. So I went back to RNA. When we finish going over that period, that will conclude my reminiscences of my Foreign Service career. As I mentioned before, Dayton Mak had gone back to the Department as Director of RNA and subsequently retired [from that position]. He recommended me as his replacement. I got a cable suggesting that I accept this assignment to RNA. I was delighted because I always sought Washington assignments. I owned a piece of land outside of Washington, and my hobby was developing it.

I went back to RNA in mid 1971. The Director of INR was Ray Cline, who had been in CIA. The Secretary of State at that time was William D. Rogers. I knew him, but he didn't know me. I had interpreted for him in 1970, I believe it was, when he made a visit to Lebanon. I went over with him to talk to President Suleiman Franjieh of Lebanon. That was another occasion when the Lebanese asked the Americans to help move the Palestinians out of Lebanon and back to Palestine. Rogers didn't tell him what everyone knows. Those Palestinians in Lebanon are never going to go anywhere. They're Lebanese for all practical purposes.

Q: This was a different kind of an assignment in INR. Previously, you'd worked there as an analyst and so on. This was more of a management job, I would imagine.

JONES: Well, not really. RNA consisted of 22 people. I was Director of an area including North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Helmut Sonnenfeldt was Director of the Office of Research for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at that time. Dave Mark was Ray Cline's principal deputy—a brilliant guy who was one of those who ended up in a tiny African Embassy after a change in administration. That was four years later.

My job in INR primarily involved “carrying” intelligence to my superiors in INR and to NEA, and occasionally “upstairs” to the Executive Secretariat.

Q: When you say “carrying” intelligence, do you mean delivering reports or...

JONES: I'll give you an example. My administrative load was light because I had a deputy, Phil Stoddard, who was very competent in that respect. He was a Greek expert and also worked on Greece. He ran the office, pretty much.

So every morning I would come into the Department at 7:30 AM, read the cable, news agency ticker, FBIS [Foreign Broadcast Information System] traffic, reports from CIA and NSA, and so forth. I would then show up in NEA [Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs] at their staff meeting. I've forgotten the drill now, but at some point, before the NEA staff meeting, I had to go in to see the Assistant Secretary for NEA, Joe Sisco for most of this period, and give him anything that I thought was urgent, crucial, or sensitive. We didn't have staff meetings in INR as often, but anything significant that had happened would normally have been called to the attention of the Director of INR by the people in the INR “Watch Office,” which was just downstairs [on the sixth floor of the Department] from the “Operations Center” [on the seventh floor of the Department]. The INR Watch Office and the Operation Center worked closely together. [There was a stairway between the Operations Center and the INR Watch Office, so that you didn't have to go outside the “secure area” to go from one place to the other.]

During that four-year tour [in RNA] there were two or three episodes which might be worthy of mention. Assistant Secretary Joe Sisco was an extremely competent officer who is not held in high regard by most of those who worked with him because he was considered an “operator” and a bit of a “feather merchant.” It was felt that he was willing to “cut corners” when it was convenient to do so.

Q: By “cutting corners” do you mean “shading” a description of a situation to fit his policy views?

JONES: Yes. Well, let's just say that he seemed more like a political appointee—somebody who was less interested in a single-minded defense of American interests in the [Middle Eastern] area than in the pragmatic cultivation of favorable contacts with the special interest groups involved. Primarily, this involved the Israeli lobby. In the Middle East the Israeli lobby is the number-one special interest group.

I remember one situation. Somebody came to me and said, “I have a friend, formerly assigned to INR, who is going to go to the press and is going to reveal that the Department of State has been wiretapping a friendly Embassy.” I will tell you, off the tape, which Embassy it was. I don't think that I will take it on myself to “declassify” it because [this information] was very sensitive at the time and may still be very sensitive.

Q: You're the best judge.

JONES: So I immediately went to my superiors in INR. They said, “This is bad. We'd better go upstairs.” So we went upstairs to somebody very highly placed in the Department. I'll tell you who that was, off the tape, and you can pass it on if you want. We discussed the matter upstairs. I said what I knew about the situation. It was clear that the FBI, at the request of the Department, had been wiretapping this Embassy's telephones for some period of time. As a matter of fact, I had been reading these wiretaps and had been drawing interesting information from them to the attention of my superiors in INR and

NEA. So the officer in charge of the meeting said, “All right. The solution is very simple. First, we immediately terminate these wiretaps. Secondly, if anybody asks the Department spokesman, 'Are you wiretapping' Embassy X?' we say, 'No.' If they ask, 'Have you wiretapped Embassy X in the past?' we say that we cannot be responsible for the actions of previous administrations.”This, of course, is standard procedure in such affairs. Some months later, [without any previous warning] I suddenly received from the FBI a transcript of a wiretap from this Embassy. So I carried it into NEA, Sisco looked at it, went through the roof, called in his deputy, Rodger Davies, and said, “What the hell's going on here?” Davies said, “Well, you authorized this.” Sisco said, “When the hell did I authorize it?” Davies replied, “Do you remember a week or two back when I came in with several items for your clearance? This was one of them.” Sisco “reamed” Davies up and down, which was extremely embarrassing to me, because I had to stand there all through this and hear Sisco reaming out Davies, who was Deputy Assistant Secretary of NEA. Sisco said, “You should know better than to try to run something as sensitive as this through me.” My own conclusion was that Sisco was not that “dense.” When he authorized the wiretap, he knew what he was doing. However, until I brought the intercept to him, he may not have realized that it was going to come back to him. Perhaps he'd asked for special handling, because that's, of course, the way they [often handle such matters] in the Department. If a matter is extra sensitive, it goes above the level of an office director in INR. When it came to me, he was afraid that word would get back to the Secretary that information of this kind was all over the Department again. I had the impression that he was trying to saddle Davies with responsibility for it, in case anything went wrong.

Another thing that happened was that I also received sensitive intelligence from other agencies—other than CIA. I should “backtrack” a little and say that Jim Akins was one of the most brilliant and also one of the most egocentric officers in the Foreign Service. Akins was a man who decided early on [in his career] that the future was in oil and that he would become an oil expert. He made himself such an oil expert that he was sent to the White House as deputy to a man whose name I forget but who was the President's “oil

man.” When Akins had had his fill of Washington duty, he told people in his car pool that he was going to tell Secretary of State Rogers that he wanted an Embassy overseas [as Ambassador]. If he wasn't goingto be appointed Ambassador, he would quit.

Well, Akins did get an Embassy overseas. He was appointed Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Some time after he became Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, I was told by a member of his staff that Henry Kissinger, who, by that time, was Secretary of State as well as the Director of the National Security Council staff, took a trip to Saudi Arabia. A meeting was set up with the King [of Saudi Arabia]—I can't remember who the King was at this time. Kissinger told Ambassador Akins, “I want to meet with the King alone—just the two of us, with an interpreter.” Akins said, “I am the President's representative in Saudi Arabia and I will be at that meeting. If I'm not, then my resignation goes in by IMMEDIATE cable.” Kissinger “caved in,” according to my source, but Kissinger apparently made the decision at that time that Ambassador Akins was on the list “to be disposed of” at the earliest opportunity.

Ambassador Akins had a conversation with a foreign ambassador—not an American and not a Saudi—and said that the ambassador might inform his government that American policy was a little “off base” in [a certain] respect and [suggested that the Ambassador's] government might be able to have a salutary influence on American policy. This information came back to me from a sensitive intelligence source. I won't be more precise how it came back. My obligation, I'm sorry to say, was to carry this information to [various senior people] and, of course, it got back to Secretary Kissinger. Within weeks Akins' resignation from the Department of State was announced.

Another thing that happened was that I received a very sensitive message from a British intelligence source. British intelligence was not as extensive as ours, but it was very good. This message, on a subject which I can't even recall, was sensitive enough so that I had to take it immediately to the Director of INR. At the time the Director [was not in the

Department], so I had to take it to his Deputy. The Deputy and I went “upstairs” to report this to Larry Eagleburger.

Q: He was then the Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs?

JONES: Right. Eagleburger took the news, didn't seem too distressed, and said that he would take the necessary action. However, I learned subsequently that this message had already come in through American intelligence but had been “covered up”—that is, had been withheld from officials at my level. I hadn't known about it. The Director of INR, Bill Hyland, had been recently appointed. Kissinger had brought him over from CIA.

Arrangements had been made to hold up the distribution of the message when it came through American intelligence channels, but senior officials didn't realize that there was still the British report that would be coming in.

Q: These are longstanding exchange arrangements [with the British] which go back, to my personal knowledge, at least 50 years.

JONES: Well, of course, we have also had very good exchange arrangements with the Israelis, but there are certain things which we didn't communicate to them, and that's where Jonathan Pollard [convicted of conducting espionage on behalf of Israel] came in.

There are two more episodes I would like to mention. The first one relates to the “Yom Kippur” War of 1973. It started on October 6, [1973], and came, I confess, as a complete surprise to me because, as I mentioned earlier, I had come to the conclusion that, although Arab military action was likely at some time in the near future, the Arabs would try the “oil weapon” first, before resorting to military action.

The “Yom Kippur” War lasted, roughly, from October 6, 1973, to the end of October. The initial flow [of events] in the war was in favor of the Arabs. The Israelis were caught by surprise. They were just as much “asleep at the switch” as we in the United States were.

Furthermore, the Egyptian forces, in particular, made extraordinarily good use of handheld anti-tank missiles and of surface to air missiles against Israeli aircraft. However, the United States immediately, with full support from President Nixon, instituted an airlift through the Azores, as I recall, of electronic...

Q: That was because all of the NATO countries, including the British, refused to allow us to fly through their air space...

JONES: Exactly. I mentioned earlier the trend toward increasing American support for Israel. This had no relevance to whether the administration in power was Republican or Democratic. Either way, America has supported Israel more and more strongly. By 1973 President Nixon was perfectly happy to send Israel sophisticated, electronic gear, whose nature I have no knowledge of. This was done to help Israel counter the Egyptian SAM's [Surface to Air Missiles] and “Saggers,” hand-held anti-tank weapons—[both obtained from the Soviet Union]. This American equipment was deployed so rapidly and so effectively that within a little more than two weeks the Israeli Defense Forces had not only stopped the Syrian and the Egyptian advance but they had started pushing the Egyptians back toward the Suez Canal. Then—I guess that it was Ariel Sharon who gets credit for this—the Israelis crossed the Canal and took Suez. In a brilliant, military maneuver they split the Egyptian forces at the “hinge” between the [Egyptian] First and Third Armies. The Egyptian command structure was such that they had to refer to Cairo for overall, operational control. [As a result] the two [Egyptian] armies on the Canal did not have proper liaison [with each other], and neither one realized what was happening to the other. By late October the Israelis were not only across the Canal on pontoon [bridges] but they had put in a causeway right across the Canal.

By the time the Israelis were approaching Suez the bulk of the Egyptian Third Army, still on the East bank of the Canal, was cut off. The Israelis obviously had the military objective of seizing Suez and capturing the whole Third Army. [At this point] the United States and the Soviet Union intervened and said that it was time for a cease-fire. As I recall it, the first

cease-fire took effect on October 22. It held for a bit, and then the Israelis started to move again. A second cease-fire was ordered on October 25.

Unknown to me, at the very highest level there were exchanges between Secretary of State Kissinger and the Israeli High Command. We talked about this earlier. According to a newspaper article which I have, [Moshe] Dayan [then Israeli Minister of Defense] said years later that the Americans told the Israelis, “If you don't stop now, we will be obliged to helicopter supplies in to the [Egyptian] Third Army across the Canal with our own military forces.” And so the Israelis stopped.

Of course, this was also the time when the United States declared “Defense Condition 3,” which is two stages short of nuclear war. (There are five stages of military alert.) I have never been persuaded, in all of my reading, that there was any justification whatsoever for going to “Defense Condition 3.” It was declared in the middle of the night by [Secretary of State] Henry Kissinger, following a “rump” meeting of the National Security Council. From what I know, I think that it was a purely political maneuver, in order to divert American public opinion from the Watergate affair. However, I don't have all the facts, obviously.

My own involvement in the [Yom Kippur War] consisted of getting up at 3:00 AM, [coming into the Department, and catching up on developments]. One day [during the war] our office, RNA, had been working around the clock manning the INR Watch Office, tracking current intelligence, and trying to keep everyone informed as to where the forces [involved in combat] were. But this was the one and only time that I was invited by NPIC [National Photo Interpretation Center] to come down to their office and pick up pictures (4' x 5', I believe) of the Canal and to carry them back and show them to Assistant Secretary Sisco at the opening of business. Sisco took me up to Kissinger's office. I have dealt with Kissinger three times—twice to interpret [in Arabic] and once only to brief him. This was the time that I briefed Kissinger.

Q: This was in October, 1973.

JONES: Yes, approximately October 28, 1973. I can't date it more precisely because I didn't keep a diary at that time.

Q: That's close enough.

JONES: I showed Kissinger these pictures, one by one and said, “This is the situation on the Canal from United States photography.” It may be highly classified as to whether this was aircraft or satellite photography, but I'm not violating security because I don't know which it was. All I can say is that they were very fine pictures. Secretary Kissinger asked one question, “Is there a danger here that the Israelis, having crossed the Canal, will be cut off by the Egyptian forces North and South [of them] and that the Israeli salient will be surrounded and captured?” I didn't know the answer immediately, but, fortunately, he was called to the telephone. During the three or four minutes that he was on the telephone I was able to shuffle through this stack of huge pictures. I showed him a picture which answered the question, without any comment required whatsoever. On the West bank of the Canal the Egyptian forces were in total chaos. You could see destroyed tanks, Egyptian columns in disarray, every man for himself—just as bad as in 1956, when they all took their shoes off. On the East bank of the Canal the Israeli forces were lined up in perfect order for five miles, crossing not only on the pontoon bridge but also on the causeway, and then fanning out—some to the North and most of them to the outskirts of the city of Suez. I said, “The Israelis obviously have complete control of the air and they can go right to Cairo if they want to.” So the answer was that nobody was going to stop [the Israelis], unless we stopped them.

Q: After a very rocky start they had won completely.

JONES: Right.

Q: A very interesting episode. You were then in INR until when?

JONES: 1975.

Q: And that's when you decided to retire?

JONES: Yes. One last episode. The year has gone from mind, but during my tour in INR Ambassador Frank Meloy got into his official car in Beirut, with his driver and his Economic Counselor, and tried to cross the “Green Line” [in Beirut] to call on [Lebanese] President Sarkis, whom I had known quite well. As a matter of fact, Sarkis had given me a farewell party in Beirut. Meloy never got across the “Green Line.” He was picked up by—who knows? I don't think that we ever knew—Palestinians, Shiite, or some anti-American force—and shot. I'm not even sure if we ever recovered the bodies. I was told by an INR officer in the Watch Office [in Washington] that Meloy had just received a cable saying, “If you perceive no objection, strongly recommend that you establish contact with Sarkis.” Ambassador Meloy was fairly new to the post and had not yet talked to Sarkis. [The purpose of the call] was to let [Sarkis] know that the Americans were ready to cooperate with him and also to elicit his views. My source tells me that as soon as the word came back that Meloy had died, all copies of that telegram were retrieved, and it became a “non-telegram.” Somebody in the [Executive] Secretariat did not want the Secretary to be vulnerable to charges that he had sent Frank Meloy these instructions.

Q: A reasonable interpretation of this sequence of events is that Meloy was murdered while carrying out these instructions.

JONES: Right. That's the end of that episode.

Q: Well, what made you decide to retire? You'd been in the Foreign Service, then, from 1946 to 1975. About 30 years.

JONES: I think that it was in 1974. I was asked to join a team of State Department officers to go out to Utah to give talks on foreign policy—Middle East policy. I spoke to about five groups during the two or three days that I was out there. I described American foreign

policy in the Middle East. [I said that] personally, I didn't like this policy, I considered that it was mistaken, and I gave my reasons. Since I was talking in Utah, my position did not provoke any response except from one or two members of the audience, who quite clearly and sharply disapproved of [my views]. Obviously, they were supporters of Israel and of our policy of backing Israel.

However, the last meeting we had was a joint meeting at which the other members of the team and I met with a group. We were all invited to speak. Once again I said, “This is the Department's position.” Then I gave the reasons why I wished that the Department would change the policy. One of the members of the team, who was from INR, and another member of the team, Harvey Feldman—I'm not sure where he was assigned at the time—took sharp, immediate issue with me during the meeting with our audience in Utah. They said, “Well, we can't understand why Jones would take this position. Personally, we can see nothing wrong whatsoever with American policy. We don't agree with him.” I said, “OK. It's an open society and this is a democracy.”

Some time after I returned to INR, Bill Hyland invited me into his office and said, “How would you like to go out as Ambassador somewhere?” I said, “Well, I took this tour for four years and I'd just as soon finish it.” I added that if anybody asked me to take a specific Embassy, I couldn't guarantee that I'd say No, but I suspect that I would say No.

By that time I was nearly 55. I felt that I was being told to go out to the kind of Embassy that they'd give me—like the one they gave Dave Mark, who went out to Rwanda, I think it was, or the one they gave Bill Dale. He went out to the Central African Republic.

So the answer to your question, then, as to why I retired, is that, first, my career had come to an end. Secondly, even if they couldn't “throw me out,” I wanted to retire while I was young enough to develop a farm property such as the one I have down here in North Carolina. Thirdly, I have to admit that I was influenced by the financial aspect of it. The sooner you retired under the rather bizarre pension/contributions plan [then in effect],

the better off you were. [This arrangement has since been changed.] When I heard that Heywood Stackhouse, my contemporary in many respects, including time in grade, was retiring—he was the Officer in Charge of the Israeli desk at that time—I thought, “My God, am I overlooking something?” I started looking at the alternatives and decided, “To hell with it.”

As a matter of fact, I applied to retire in January, 1975. And then I got cold feet. I went to my friend, Hugh Appling [then Chief of Personnel], who also never got a good ambassadorship. I said to Hugh, “I'd like to withdraw my application for retirement.” He very kindly arranged that for me. But then during the summer of 1975, unlike the previous summer, when the Deputy Director of INR went on leave, I was not asked to replace him. [In the summer of 1974] I had done a two-week stint as Acting Deputy Director [of INR]. In the summer of 1975 I wasn't asked [to do this]. I thought, “Well, that's it. My career is over.” So I retired in September, 1975.

Q: Well, you had a marvelous career. You had a tremendous range of posts—all of them in the Middle East, is that right?

JONES: Correct. That was my choice. After retiring I became a consultant with the Department. I wrote two or three things which, I think, were vindicated [by subsequent events]. Hal Saunders asked me to write a paper on the future of Lebanon. I predicted that Lebanon would be partitioned. I think that that prediction has been vindicated. Today, Lebanon has been partitioned, essentially between Syria and Israel. Israel occupies South Lebanon up to the Litani River, and the rest of Lebanon is being subsumed into Syria, although, if you ask anyone on the [Lebanon] desk in Washington today, they'll say, “Oh, Lebanon is being reestablished as an independent, democratic state.” I don't believe it.

I have also done some public writing. I wrote for the CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR until Charlotte Saikowsky was transferred from editing the editorial page. I'm very much

afraid that using my material was no help to her, although I don't know. I've written some articles for the FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL.

I don't regret having retired early, although I still believe that it is a defective personnel policy to let people retire that early.

Q: It is, in addition to being a tremendous expense in terms of life expectancy and so forth. Do you have anything else that you'd like to say about your time in the Foreign Service?

JONES: No. The rest of it would all be in-service gossip.

Q: Well, thank you very, very much. We certainly appreciate what you have had to say.

End of interview